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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 437. FOR WEEK ENDING MAY 15TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES

No. 437.] For the Week ending May 15th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

DEEDS THAT WON THE EMPIRE.

XI.—THE SHANNON AND THE CHESAPEAKE.

ON the early morning of June 1st, 1813, a solitary British frigate, H.M.S. *Shannon*, was cruising within sight of Boston lighthouse. She was a ship of about 1,000 tons, and bore every mark of long and hard service. No gleam of colour sparkled about her. Her sides were rusty, her sails weather-stained; a solitary flag flew from her mizzen-peak, and even its blue had been bleached by sun and rain and wind to a dingy grey. A less romantic and more severely practical ship did not float, and her captain was of the same type as the ship.

Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke was an Englishman to the core, and of a type happily not uncommon. His fame will live as long as the British flag flies, yet a more sober and prosaic figure can hardly be imagined. He was not, like Nelson, a quarter-deck Napoleon; he had no gleam of Dundonald's matchless brilliancy. He was as deeply religious as Havelock, or one of Cromwell's major-generals; he had the frugality of a Scotsman, and the heavy-footed common-sense of a Hollander.

He was as nautical as a web-footed bird, and had no more "nerves" than a fish—a domestic Englishman, whose heart was always with the little girls at Brokehall, in Suffolk, but for whom the service of his country was a piety.

A sober-suited, half-melancholy common-sense was Broke's characteristic, and he had applied it to the working of his ship, till he had made the vessel, perhaps, the most formidable fighting machine of her size afloat. He drilled his gunners until, from the swaying platform of their decks, they shot with a deadly coolness and accuracy nothing floating could resist.

Broke, as a matter of fact, owed his famous victory over the *Chesapeake* to one of his matter-of-fact precautions. The first broadside fired by the *Chesapeake* sent a 32-pound shot through one of the gun-room cabins into the magazine passage of the *Shannon*, where it might easily have ignited some grains of loose powder and blown the ship up, if Broke had not taken the precaution of elaborately *damping* that passage before the action began. The prosaic side of Broke's character is very amusing. In his diary he records his world-famous victory thus:

"June 1st. Off Boston. Moderate."

"N.W.—W(rote) Laurence."

"P.M.—Took *Chesapeake*."

Was ever a shining victory packed into fewer or duller words? Broke's scorn of the histrionic is shown by his reply to one of his own men who, when the *Chesapeake*, one blaze of fluttering colours, was bearing down upon her drab-coloured opponent, said to his commander, eyeing the bleached and solitary flag at the *Shannon's* peak:

"Mayn't we have three ensigns, sir, like she has?"

"No," said Broke, "we have always been an *unassuming* ship!"

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EDITED BY C. A. PEARSON
OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY

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And yet this unromantic English sailor had a gleam of Don Quixote in him. On this pleasant summer morning he was waiting alone, under easy sail, outside a hostile port, strongly fortified and full of armed vessels, waiting for an enemy's ship bigger than himself to come and fight him!

He had sent in the previous day, by way of challenge, a letter that recalls the days of chivalry.

"As the *Chesapeake*," he wrote to Laurence, its captain, "appears now ready for sea, I request that you will do me the favour to meet the *Shannon* with her, ship to ship." He proceeded to explain the exact armament of the *Shannon*, the number of her crew, the interesting circumstance that he was short of provisions and water, and that he had sent away his consort so that the terms of the duel might be fair.

"If you will favour me," he says, "with any plan of signals or telegraph, I will warn you should any of my friends be too nigh, while you are in sight, until I can detach them out of the way. Or," he suggests, coaxingly, "I would sail under a flag of truce to any place you think safest from our cruisers, hauling it down when fair to begin hostilities. Choose your terms," he concludes, "but let us meet."

Having sent this amazing letter, this middle-aged, unromantic, but hard-fighting captain climbed at daybreak to his own maintop, and sat there till half-past eleven, watching the challenged ship, to see if her foretopsail were unloosed and she were coming out to fight.

It is easy to understand the causes which kindled a British sailor of even Broke's unimaginative temperament into flame. On June 18th, 1812, the United States, with magnificent audacity, declared war against Great Britain, which, at that particular time, had 621 efficient cruisers at sea, 102 being line-of-battle ships. The American navy consisted of eight frigates and twelve corvettes. It is true that Britain was at war at the same moment with half the civilised world; but what reasonable chance had the tiny naval power of the United States against the mighty fleets of Britain, commanded by men trained in the school of Nelson, and rich with the traditions of the Nile and Trafalgar?

As a matter of fact, in the war which followed, the commerce of the United States was swept out of existence. But the Americans were of the same fighting stock as the English; to the Viking blood, indeed, they added Yankee ingenuity and resource, making a very formidable combination; and up to the June morning, when the *Shannon* was waiting outside Boston Harbour for the *Chesapeake*, the naval honours of the war belonged to the Americans.

The Americans had no fleet, and the campaign was one of single ship against single ship, but in these combats the Americans had scored more successes in twelve months than French seamen had gained in twelve years. The *Guerriere*, the *Java*, and the *Macedonian* had each been captured in single combat, and every British post-captain betwixt Portsmouth and Halifax was swearing with mere fury.

The Americans were shrewd enough to invent a new type of frigate which, in strength of frame, weight of metal, and general fighting power, was to a British frigate of the same class almost what an ironclad would be to a wooden ship. The *Constitution*, for example, was in size to the average British frigate as 15·3 to 10·9; in weight of metal as 76 to 51; and in crew as 46 to 25. Broke, however, had a well-founded belief in his ship and his men, and he proposed, in his sober fashion, to restore the tarnished honour of his flag by capturing single-handed the best American frigate afloat.

The *Chesapeake* was a fine ship, perfectly equipped, under a daring and popular commander. Laurence was a man of brilliant ingenuity and courage, and had won fame four months before by capturing in the *Hornet*, after a hard fight, the British brig-of-war *Peacock*. For this feat he had been promoted to the *Chesapeake*, and in his brief speech from the quarter-deck, just before the fight with the *Shannon* began, he called up the memory of the fight which made him a popular hero by exhorting his crew to "*Peacock* her, my lads! *Peacock* her!"

The *Chesapeake* was larger than the *Shannon*, its crew was nearly a hundred men stronger, its weight of fire 598lb., as against the *Shannon's* 538lb. Her guns fired double-headed shot, and bars of wrought iron, connected by links and loosely tied by a few rope yarns, which when discharged from the gun spread out and formed a flying iron chain six feet long. Its canister shot contained jagged pieces of iron, broken bolts, and nails.

As the British had a reputation for boarding, a large barrel of unslacked lime was provided to fling in the faces of the boarders. An early shot from the *Shannon*, by the way, struck this cask of lime and scattered its contents in the faces of the Americans themselves! Part of the equipment of the *Chesapeake* consisted of several hundred pairs of handcuffs, intended for the wrists of English prisoners; Boston citizens prepared a banquet in honour of the victors for the same evening; and a small fleet of pleasure-boats followed the *Chesapeake* as she came gallantly out to the fight.

Never was a braver, shorter, or more murderous fight. Laurence, the most gallant of men, bore steadily down, without firing a shot, to the starboard quarter of the *Shannon*. When within fifty yards he luffed; his men sprang into the shrouds and gave three cheers. Broke fought with characteristic silence and composure. He forbade his men to cheer, enforced the sternest silence along his deck, and ordered the captain of each gun to fire as his piece bore on the enemy.

"Fire into her quarters," he said, "main-deck into main-deck, quarter-deck into quarter-deck. Kill the men, and the ship is yours!"

The sails of the *Chesapeake* swept betwixt the saluting rays of the evening sun and the *Shannon*, the drifting shadow darkened the English main-deck ports, the rush of the enemy's cut-water could be heard through the grim silence of the *Shannon's* decks.

Suddenly there broke out the first gun from the *Shannon*; then her whole side leapt into flame. Never was a more fatal broadside discharged! A tempest of shot, splinter, torn hammocks, cut rigging, and wreck of every kind was hurled like a cloud across the deck of the *Chesapeake*, and of 150 men at station there, more than a hundred were killed or wounded. A more fatal loss to the Americans instantly followed, as Captain Laurence, the fiery soul of his ship, was shot through the abdomen by a British marine, and fell mortally wounded.

The answering thunder of the *Chesapeake's* guns, of course, rolled out, and then, following quick, the overwhelming blast of the *Shannon's* broadside once more. Each ship, indeed, fired two full broadsides, and as the guns fell quickly out of range, part of another broadside. The firing of the *Chesapeake* was furious and deadly enough to have disabled an ordinary ship.

It is computed that forty effective shots would be

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enough to disable a frigate; the *Shannon* during the six minutes of the firing was struck by no fewer than 158 shots, a fact which proves the steadiness and power of the American fire. But the fire of the *Shannon* was overwhelming. In those same six fatal minutes she smote the *Chesapeake* with no fewer than 362 shots, an average of sixty shots of all sizes every minute, against the *Chesapeake's* twenty-eight shots. The *Chesapeake* was fir-built, and the British shot riddled her.

One *Shannon* broadside party raked the *Chesapeake* and literally smashed the stern cabins and battery to mere splinters, as completely as though a procession of aerolites had torn through it.

The swift, deadly, concentrated fire of the British in two quick-following broadsides practically decided the combat. The partially disabled vessels drifted together, and the *Chesapeake* fell on board the *Shannon*, her quarter striking the starboard main chains. Broke, as the ships ground together, looked over the blood-splashed decks of the American and saw the men deserting the quarter-deck guns, under the terror of another broadside at so short a distance.

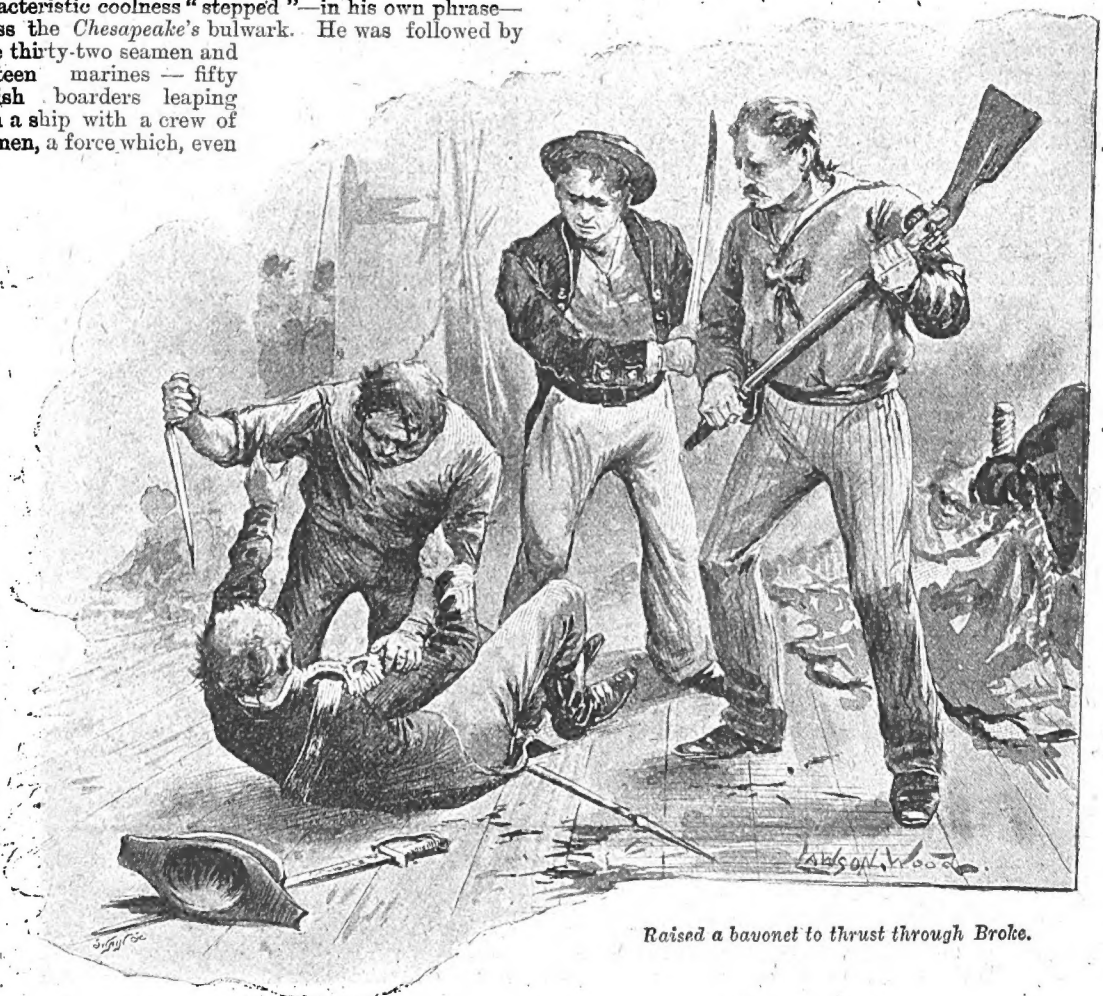
"Follow me who can!" he shouted, and with characteristic coolness "stepped"—in his own phrase—across the *Chesapeake's* bulwark. He was followed by some thirty-two seamen and eighteen marines — fifty British boarders leaping upon a ship with a crew of 400 men, a force which, even after the dreadful broadside of the Shannon, still numbered 270 unwounded men in its ranks.

It is absurd to deny to the Americans courage of the very finest quality, but the amazing and unexpected severity of the Shannon's fire had destroyed for the moment their *morale*, and the British were in a mood of victory. The boatswain of the *Shannon*, an old *Rodney* man, lashed the two ships together, and in the act had his left arm literally hacked off by repeated strokes of a cutlass and was killed.

One British midshipman, followed by five topmen, crept along the *Shannon's* foreyard and stormed the *Chesapeake's* foretop, killing the men stationed there, and then swarmed down by a back stay to join the fighting upon the deck.

Another middy tried to attack the *Chesapeake's* mizzen-top from the starboard mainyard arm, but being hindered by the foot of the topsail, stretched himself out on the mainyard arm, and from that post shot three of the enemy in succession.

Meanwhile the fight on the deck had been short and sharp; some of the Americans leapt overboard and others rushed below: and Laurence, lying wounded in



Raised a bayonet to thrust through Broke.

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his steerage, saw the wild reflux of his own men down the after-ladders. On asking what it meant, he was told the ship was boarded, and those were the *Chesapeake's* men driven from the upper decks by the English. This so exasperated the dying man that he called out repeatedly:

"Then blow her up; blow her up!"

The fight lasted exactly thirteen minutes: the broadside occupied six minutes, the boarding seven, and in thirteen minutes after the first shot the British flag was flying over the American ship; the *Shannon* and *Chesapeake* were bearing up, side by side, for Halifax! The spectators in the pleasure boats were left ruefully staring at the spectacle; those American handcuffs, so thoughtfully provided, were on American wrists; and the Boston citizens had to consume, with what appetite they might, their own banquet.

The carnage on the two ships was dreadful. In thirteen minutes 252 men were either killed or wounded, an average of nearly twenty men for every minute the fight lasted. In the combat betwixt these two frigates, in fact, nearly as many men were struck down as in the whole battle of Navarino! The *Shannon* itself lost as many men as any seventy-four gun ship ever lost in battle.

Judge Haliburton, famous as "Sam Slick," when a youth of seventeen boarded the *Chesapeake*, as the two battered ships sailed into Halifax.

"The deck," he wrote "had not been cleaned, and the coils and folds of rope were steeped in gore as if in a slaughter-house. Pieces of skin, with pendant hair, were adhering to the sides of the ship; and in one place I noticed portion of fingers protruding, as if thrust through the outer walls of the frigate!"

Watts, the first lieutenant of the *Shannon*, was killed by the fire of his own ship in a very remarkable manner. He boarded, with his captain, with his hands pulled down the *Chesapeake's* flag, and hastily bent on halliards the British ensign, as he thought, *above* the stars and stripes, and then re-hoisted it. In the hurry he had bent the British flag *under* the stars and stripes, instead of above it, and the gunners of the *Shannon*, seeing the American stripes going up first, opened fire instantly on the group at the foot of the mizzen-mast, blew the top of their own unfortunate lieutenant's head off with a grape shot, and killed three or four of their own men!

Captain Broke was desperately wounded in a curious fashion. A group of Americans, who had laid down their arms, saw the British captain standing for a moment alone on the break of the forecastle. It seemed a golden chance! They snatched up their weapons lying on the deck, and leapt upon him.

Warned by the shout of the sentry, Broke turned round to find three of the enemy with uplifted weapons rushing on him. He parried the middle fellow's pike, and wounded him in the face, but was instantly struck down with a blow from the butt end of a musket, which laid bare his skull. He also received a slash from the cutlass of the third man, which clove a portion of the skull completely away and left the brain bare.

He fell, and was grappled on the deck by the man he had first wounded, a powerful fellow, who got the uppermost and raised a bayonet to thrust through Broke. At this moment a British marine came running up, and concluding that the man underneath *must* be an American, also raised his bayonet to give *coup de grace*.

"Pooh, pooh, you fool," said Broke in the most matter-of-fact fashion, "Don't you know your captain?" whereupon the marine changed the direction of his thrust and killed the American.

The news reached London on July 7th, and was carried straight to the House of Commons, where Lord Cochrane was just concluding a fierce denunciation of the Admiralty on the ground of disasters suffered from the Americans, and Croker, the secretary to the Admiralty, was able to tell the story of the fight off Boston to the wildly cheering House as a complete defence of his department. Broke was at once created a baronet and a Knight of the Bath.

In America, on the other hand, the story of the fight was received with mingled wrath and incredulity. "I remember," says Rush, afterwards U.S. Minister at the Court of St. James, "at the first rumour of it, the universal incredulity. I remember how the post-offices were thronged for successive days with anxious thousands, how collections of citizens rode out for miles on the highway to get the earliest news the mail brought. At last, when the certainty was known, I remember the public gloom, the universal badges of mourning. 'Don't give up the ship,' the dying words of Laurence were on every tongue."

It was a great fight, the most memorable and dramatic sea-duel in naval history. The combatants were men of the same stock, and fought with equal bravery. Both nations, in fact, may be proud of a fight so frank, so fair, so gallant. The world, we may hope, will never witness another *Shannon* engaged in the fierce wrestle of battle with another *Chesapeake*, for the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes are knitted together by a bond woven of common blood and speech, and political ideals that grow stronger every year.

For years the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake* lay peacefully side by side in the Medway, and the two famous ships might well have been preserved as trophies. The *Chesapeake* was bought by the Admiralty after the fight for exactly £21,314 11s. 11½d., and six years afterwards she was sold as mere old timber for £500, was broken up, and to-day stands as a Hampshire flour mill, peacefully grinding English corn. But still on the mill timbers can be seen the marks of the grape and round shot of the *Shannon*.

("*The Great Breach of Cuidad Rodrigo*," *next week*.)

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A MURDER IN VAIN.

The frail figure propped up with pillows, the hectic spot of colour on her sunken cheeks, the bright eyes and hacking cough, told their tale only too well. Perhaps it was Fate that when the public had just recognised the strange genius of her books, Isobel Sutton should be dying.

Outside, a bleak December day was drawing to its close. A sharp, biting wind and leaden sky foretold a heavy fall of snow in the night. A bright fire burning in the grate helped to make the room look less cheerless, but it was poorly furnished, containing little else besides bare necessaries.

Crouched by the hearth was a man—almost a stranger to the invalid. It was more than nine years since Michael Sutton had deserted his wife and child, but he had turned up to-night—perhaps Fate again had willed it—to see her die.

With an effort the sick woman raised herself on her elbow and peered at her husband. There was sufficient glow from the fire to light up the man's shrunken figure. It was the same face she had known long ago, but how altered! The bloated, disfigured features spoke for themselves. It was the face of a drunkard. She shuddered and fell back.

"It is getting dark—light the candle and put it by my bed, and then——" she hesitated, but only for a moment, "then tell me what you have come for."

With an unsteady hand he did as she bid him. And the matches fell out of the box on to a roll of manuscript. He bent forward and scanned it eagerly.

"What's that?"

"Mine," and Isobel Sutton covered the MS. with her hand as though to protect it from his greedy gaze, "a novel—the last I shall ever write."

"A novel—yours—is it sold?" he asked breathlessly.

"Not yet."

"Finished?"

"Yes."

"Then it's worth a lot of money?"

"Yes, a lot of money," she repeated.

He sank on the bed and sat there rubbing his hands together gleefully.

Michael Sutton dreaded work—his whole life had been one long scheme to avoid it, but lately he had come to the end of everything, and nothing seemed to face him but the workhouse.

Now all was changed, for he was sufficiently sober to realize a small fortune lay within his grasp. Money meant drink, and drink to him was all life was worth living for.

With his eyes still fixed on his newly-found treasure, he took a flask from his pocket and commenced to drink its fiery contents.

Weak as she was, Isobel Sutton turned from him with loathing. She guessed his thoughts, but a will made and given to a neighbour would spoil his plans.

Rousing herself with a great effort she began to speak.

"I have known for some time I am dying, and I have had a hard struggle to finish this book. It will be worth more when I am dead. But it is all for Edith, she will need every farthing of it, poor child, when I am gone."

She was about to say more, but a fit of coughing seized her, leaving her almost prostrate.

Michael Sutton made no reply, but sat clasping the flask in his hand, with a vacant smile of semi-intoxication on his face.

His one idea was to get possession of the precious manuscript, but his brain was so addled with drink that he could think of nothing but that he dare not touch it now, and to-morrow would be too late.

He glanced towards the bed. The fit of coughing had brought on a sort of stupor.

Should he seize the roll of paper and escape with it?

Beads of perspiration rolled down his forehead as he gasped:

"Let's open the window—it's devilish hot."

She was so exhausted as to be hardly aware of his presence, but his voice seemed to recall her partly to her senses.

"Don't—don't," she whispered, "unless you want to see me die. The doctor said in my state it would kill me."

He stood staring at her with drunken solemnity. Then all at once an idea penetrated his muddled brain.

With unsteady footsteps he crossed the room, his dull, sodden face lit up with satisfaction. Slowly, deliberately, he threw up the window. Immediately a wave of cold air rushed into the room, driving with it little crisp flakes of snow.

The piercing cold of the night air seemed to partly restore the drunkard to his senses, as he stood there, shivering and helpless, a vague look of horror on his face.

Isobel Sutton lay stretched on the bed perished with cold. She was too weak to utter a sound, but gasped for breath. And so the long hours of the night passed slowly by.

At the first approach of dawn, the dying woman flung out her arms in the last struggle for life, and overturned the candle.

The guilty wretch cowering in the dark, fancied he could see a blue light flickering by the bedside, and buried his face in his hands to shut out the ghastly sight. Presently the light went out, and a strong smell of burning filled the room.

With a howl of rage, Sutton realised what had happened, and sprang forward to rescue the burning MS. But he was too late. The candle had completed its work, and all that remained of the dead woman's book was a smouldering heap of charred paper.

Gwendolyn Drake.

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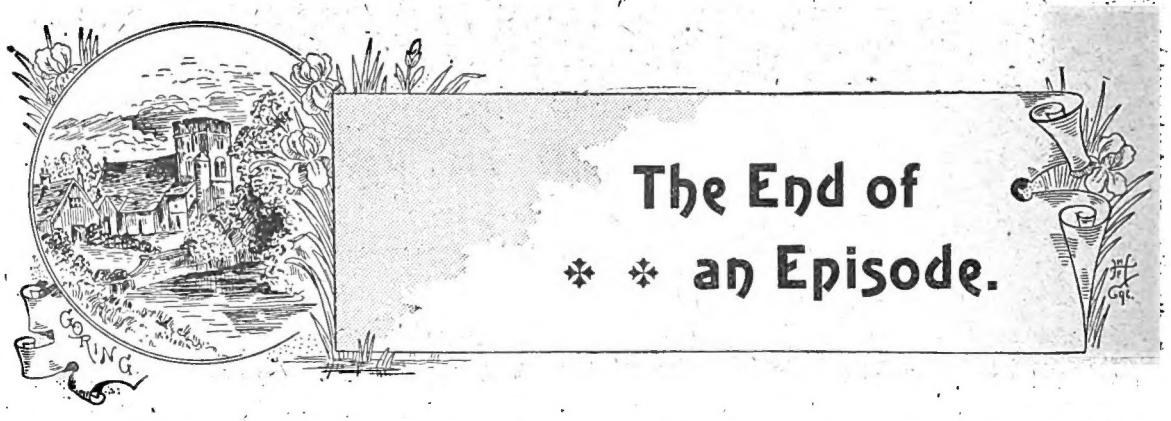

The End of an Episode.

Bella was looking uncommonly vicious that morning as she swung the General's high dog-cart round to the door, with two grooms dragging at her head and a third hastily taking in a hole of the kicking-strap.

Clinda and I stood in the porch and glanced over her critically. I own to you I did not like the look of her at all.

Clinda is the thorough-bred daughter of the old General—I must drop this horsey style of talking, but three years in Mexico does not polish one's conversation particularly—and knew no fear for anything in the way of horseflesh. And that made me the more nervous, for if anything should happen to her——

I dropped the thought, and looked at Bella again. Her little ears were laid flat back on her arched head, her eyes looked white and vicious, her polished hoofs scattered the pebbles of the gravel as she pawed impatiently at the drive.

"Well," said I, "who's to take the lines?"

I lit a cigarette, as is my invariable method when nervous. It gives one the appearance of being very calm.

Clinda was already in the box seat, whip and reins in hand.

"Come," she cried gaily, "don't keep Bella waiting for you."

I sprang up hastily after her.

"Let her go," cried Clinda. "Steady, girl, steady," and the grooms dropped away, and the mare jerked angrily forward, and swung down the drive with long, ground-covering strides.

I leant back in my seat and glanced up at the pretty profile beside me. But the pace was too fast for love dreams, and I found myself watching the mare's ears, and noticing how she tucked her tail in underneath her. For these signs have meanings to Mexicans.

"Steady, girl, steady," said Clinda, as the pace increased, and the gates at the end of the drive came in view. Now, the General's gates are not as the gates of a respectable house should be, but set close together, and the drive turns sharp round, with no sweep to speak of, into the main road.

Clinda leant forward, and I threw away my cigarette, and held fast to the sides of the cart, while the gates came nearer and nearer, and the pace became faster; and then they were on us.

There was a click, a second's pause, the gate-posts shook, a splinter flew from the wheel, and then Bella's head went down, and her hoofs rattled against the splash-board, and a moment later she was rushing madly away up the road, while Clinda's tiny hands tugged furiously at the reins, as though she had strength to stop the runaway brute.

"Let me have her, Clinda," I cried—I remember distinctly that I said "Clinda"—"give me the reins, dear," and I leant forward, and she gave them to me quietly, and sat still on the box seat, like a sensible girl, for she realised our danger.

I twisted one rein round each hand, Mexican fashion, and, leaning back, worked at the bit with all my strength. But I was on the wrong seat, and felt below my work, while the strain and pain of my muscles told me that they had lost some of their power since last I pulled in a runaway horse.

The road that she swept behind was sandy soil, and ran for a mile from the General's gates up a gentle slope. On either side were steep green banks covered with fir trees. The road was so narrow that there was scarce room for two carts to pass. The mare's head was low down out of view, her flying feet fell regularly with giant strides on the sand, the cart rolled with a gentle swaying motion, a cool breeze blew on our faces. And the bit was fastened in Bella's teeth as a rock in the earth, and no human power could shake it.

As yet I had no fear but that I should have her in hand before we reached the hill-top. A mile's sharp gallop, with two people in a high cart behind, is as much as the ordinary horse would care for. I worked furiously at the reins, and threw myself back with Herculean force, and employed every cunning art that I knew.

But the trees swept passed us, and the wheels rolled swiftly on.

Then gradually Bella slackened her pace, and the proud head, bit by bit, came higher. I felt that I almost had her in hand. I threw a glance over my shoulder and I saw something that made me, I am ashamed to say, swear fiercely.

Following us up the hill, the sun glistening on the spokes of the wheels, his head bent low over the handle-bars, rode—a fiend on a bicycle.

I say a fiend, for no human being would have ridden up the hill on that blazing July day at the pace that it was riding. We were galloping madly up the road as fast as horse could lay hoof to the ground, but that fiend rode faster. Clinda, hearing my fierce words, turned her head, and then shrieked, and taking the whip in both hands, fell to furiously flogging Bella.

"Why?" I stammered.

"It's our only chance," said Bella. "We must tire her out before the top, or—the down hill—we shall be killed. Hurry, hurry!"

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I knew that she spoke truly, and that galloping Bella down the hill meant death. Our only chance lay in having her firmly in hand before the brow of the hill was reached. We knew full well that at sight of the bicycle, Bella, in her excited state, would run mad. The General had warned me of this peculiarity of the mare's before we had started. She hated a bicycle with all the proud blood in her veins as a woman hates a rival.

"Your only chance," the General said, "if you see a bicycle coming, is to jump out and hold her head until it has passed."

Therefore, I hurried Bella on up the hill with whip and voice, with the hopes of tiring her out, and then being able to spring to her bridle, and wait until the bicycle fiend had passed, and so avert catastrophe. Gradually I felt her pace slacken, her stride shorten, and saw her head come higher. There was no doubt that her bolt was over. I breathed again.

"Be careful; the bicycle is just behind." Bella's voice rang in my ears. I threw myself back on the reins, and cried out to the man to stop until I could reach the horse's head. It was too late.

Ting! Ting!

The metallic sound of a bicycle bell rang out on the air. A second later the fiend on the bicycle, unheeding my cries, shot by us, and Bella leapt in the air. The man leered up at me as he passed.

* * * * *

When it was all over I followed Clinda on to the General's lawn, where tea was being served under the shade of the trees, and where the hot sun found it impossible to penetrate. A tea-party seemed to be going on. I saw the General, and the Generaless, and the Eldest Son, and a score of others ranged round them. No doubt all were eager to hear our adventures.

The Eldest Son came forward with tea and cakes in either hand, and asked how we had enjoyed ourselves. I refused the tea and sank with a groan into a chair. Grim irony indeed to offer tea and cakes to a man who has narrowly escaped taking an innocent life within the space of an hour!

The Eldest Son found a chair for Clinda.

"Well," said he cheerily, "and did you have a pleasant drive?"

Then Clinda went off with her story at a pace, as I tell her now, that the galloping mare's could not compare with.

"Such adventures!" she cried. "Bella bolted before we had reached the road, and went galloping down the drive, and ran into the gate, and nearly upset us."

"What," roared the General—the General was as careful of the appearance of his gates as of the condition of his horses and cigars—"ran into the gate-posts, did you? Who was driving?"

"I was," I muttered; "it was all my fault—everything was my fault. Go on, please"—I waved my hand to Clinda—"let the tale be told."

"Inexcusable," growled the General. Everyone looked at me with scorn and pity. "What did you do next, pray?"

"Then," went on Clinda, "Bella put her head down and bolted up the road. We lost all power over her. Oh, she flew like an express train! It was terrible. First we nearly ran over a workman, and then a dog broke his heart in trying to chase us, and then we nearly charged into a group of nursery-maids and babies—and then—and then the most wonderful thing in all the world happened. Give me some more tea, and I will tell you all about it."

They waited in breathless silence whilst Clinda's cup was being refilled. The General took the opportunity to rebuke me for allowing Bella to bolt. I tried to prove that it was no ordinary case. I showed him a new pair of gloves I had put on when we started. They were worn to threads.

"He's trying to excuse himself now," muttered an old lady in a corner.

I felt that my reputation had gone for ever. In future, everyone would scorn me. If I could light a cigarette I felt that I might appear less nervous. I could not do so. My nerve had deserted me.

"I have never seen anything more wonderful in my life," cried Clinda, when she had sipped her tea, and had kept her audience waiting sufficiently long to hear her tale. "We had just reached the top of the hill when I looked round to see if any of the babies were alive, and what do you think I saw coming up after us, gaining hand over hand?"

"What?" Everyone waited breathlessly.

"A man on a bicycle," said Clinda. "A handsome man, with fair hair, and a long, curly moustache."

"A bicycle face," I put in. "Nasty, strained expression."

The Eldest Son laughed. Everyone looked at me as though I were spoiling the story.

"He came quite close to us," went on Clinda, "and then he rang his bell and shot past, and before I knew what had happened he had saved our lives. It was wonderful! He suddenly took his feet off the pedals and leapt on to the saddle, balanced himself a moment, and then sprang off, regardless of the danger. He caught at the bridle as he came down, and stopped Bella before she had gone ten yards. It was the cleverest thing I have ever seen. I felt that I could have kissed him!"

The Eldest Son was digging me in the ribs.

"I think," I said to the General, "I will go in for a little, if you will excuse me."

The Eldest Son and I strolled away, while the others crowded round Clinda to hear her adventures all over again.

"What on earth happened to you?" said the Eldest Son. "You seem to have been having a lively time."

"It was nothing extraordinary. Bella merely bolted, and just when I was getting her in hand again, a fiend on a bicycle came scorching past us, sprang off as I pulled the mare in, and jumped at her head, and then stood smiling and bowing to us, as though he had saved our lives. I'll teach him manners if I see him again. I'll break every bone in his——"

Ting! ting!

I started as though shot. My nerve was completely gone. The bicycling fiend was pedalling towards us up the General's drive. The eldest son took my arm.

"Restrain yourself, my dear fellow," he said, laughing immoderately.

"Good-afternoon." The fiend skipped from his machine, and bowed before us. I went forward with a frown. "Do you want to see me?" I said.

"No," said the fiend. "I called in to see the General, and to pay my respects to his most charming daughter."

"Well, you can't do it. The General's not at home to-day; he's out. Besides, he doesn't live here."

The Eldest Son and the bicycle fiend began laughing.

"Oh, come," said the Eldest Son, "that's a queer statement!" He took the other's arm. "I'll introduce you to the governor; he'll be delighted to see you."

They strolled away together towards the tea-party,

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and I could see the Eldest Son introducing the bicycle fiend all round.

I dug my heel into the grass and muttered things beneath my breath. This portion of the story is too painful to dwell long upon. Suffice it to say that the miserable day ended by the bicycling fiend becoming the darling of the ladies, and by the General slapping him on the back and declaring that he was a hearty good fellow, and inviting him to stay at the house as long as he wished.

He came, and he stayed. He and Clinda spent whole days together. They rode, they drove, they bicycled—the man could do anything on a bicycle—they played tennis, they went on the river together, and seemed to find each other immensely entertaining. Clinda seemed to forget my existence. Life at the General's became unbearable, and I decided to go away. When I had arrived at this conclusion, however, I heard that the bicycle fiend could not stay more than a couple of days, on account of his engagements in town. I determined to wait.

* * * * *

"Train just gone out. No train for two hours. By your leave."

The porter brushed past, and left us staring blankly into each other's faces. There was the General, the Generaless, the Eldest Son, and Clinda and myself. We had run up to town for an afternoon in Regent Street, and now we had missed the down train, and had two hours to wait.

"Oh, dear," cried the Generaless, "whatever shall we do?"

"We had better have something to eat," said the General.

"And then we will go to a theatre," cried Clinda.

"Or a circus," said the eldest son. "I haven't been to a circus for years. It's immense fun. There isn't a theatre within a mile, and there is a circus next door. Come along."

So it was settled. After dinner we dropped into the circus. We found it very amusing. I sat by Clinda, and pointed out the difference between a Mexican wild horse and a wild horse on an English stage. She seemed quite interested, and I felt that I was rapidly regaining the ground that I had lost through the visit of the bicycle fiend.

After an hour at the circus we thought it was time to be moving. The Generaless was becoming nervous lest we should miss the last train. We were about to go when the eldest son discovered that it was time for the best turn on the programme.

"The Most Marvellous Bicycling Feat in the World,"

ran the bills. "The Clown will stand on the saddle of the bicycle, and make a marvellous leap through a fire-encircled hoop on to a galloping horse's back. The Wonder of the World."

My programme fluttered down on to the benches below. Clinda's face, I fancied, turned a trifle pale.

At that moment a clown on a bicycle came careering into the ring.

We knew the face of that clown!

The people were roaring at his antics. He threw himself into all sorts of grotesque positions, making jokes as he travelled round the ring. Suddenly he drew his feet up on to the saddle, and leaning forward on to the handle-bars, came unsteadily down the centre of the ring directly towards the spot where we were seated. A horse was waiting in the ring for the clown's leap. The clown looked up for a moment, and his glance fell full upon us. His face was horror-stricken. He lost his balance, and bicycle and bicycle fiend fell over with a clatter.

We had seen the man before—on another occasion. We knew how it was that he could bicycle so well, and how he made his money to support himself in the best society.

He had deliberately duped us, and he realised that we were in his secret.

The people roared at the clown's fall. Clinda pressed my arm, and implored me to take her out.

We took our departure from the circus. At the door I turned for a moment, and I saw the bicycle fiend standing by his machine, a half-piteous, half-humourous expression on his face. The people were cheering him now, and perhaps he found consolation in the fact.

The General and the Generaless went on in front together towards the station. The Eldest Son and Clinda and I followed behind, and we were very quiet. The Eldest Son dropped into a tobacconist's shop for a cigar.

I took Clinda's hand, and she looked up at me imploringly. And then it all came right.

Marcus Tindal.

About a Home-made Cake.

This is no foolish story about the toughness of a home-made cake. We know better than that. In fact, so confident are we that the cakes made at home are by no means to be despised, that Eighteen Guineas are being offered for the best sent us, together with the recipes. More cannot be said here—purchase *Home Notes* for May 15th and learn the particulars for yourself. This is the way in which *Home Notes* will celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

"A Lady Explorer."

If you want an interesting account of the adventures and perils of a Lady Explorer, look in this week's

"Girls."

The College Sports at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, are fully described and illustrated.

A short complete school story:

"The Junior Room Gazette,"

is most amusing, giving as it does a really witty account of how a school newspaper was founded by some very juvenile amateurs.

And you ought not to miss Chapter II. of

"The Great House of Castleton,"

by Winifred Graham, which is even more amusing than the last.

Girls is a dainty paper for girls of all ages, from six to sixty. It costs one penny, and is published every Thursday. Number Two is on sale on Thursday, May 13th.

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TOLD BY THE DOCTOR.

III.—THE MESMERIST'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

When Lord Aldwyn called upon me at my house in Cheyne Walk, I knew at once that it was not the first time I had seen his face. I could not bring to mind, however, the occasion of our meeting, although I was sure that it was quite recent, and my visitor did not appear to recognise me. He informed me that, on the advice of Dr. Canise, of Wigmore Street, he had decided to consult me on a private matter which concerned him deeply. Canise had recommended me because he knew that I had given a good deal of attention to the subject of mesmerism, he informed me.

"Struck a match with the most innocent intentions in the world."

The mention of mesmerism interested me at once, and the fact that the case came to me from Dr. Canise, the well-known mental specialist, prepared me a little for the nature of the question which Lord Aldwyn wished to submit to me. When he said that it would be necessary to tell me some details of his history during the last few weeks, as a preliminary, I pushed my cigar-box towards him, and prepared to listen with interest.

My companion selected a cheroot, and, as he struck a match to light it, I recollected quite suddenly where I had met him. It was dusk in my dining-room, and the flare of the vesta thrown on the Marquis's face was all I needed to recall our meeting.

"I thought your face very familiar," I said. "Did you not attend a spiritualist séance of Professor Vaudary's in Paris?"

The Marquis laughed slightly.

"Were you there?" he asked, "that night when I spoilt the séance? I do not remember seeing you."

I felt it necessary to apologise for my presence there.

"I happened to be in Paris, and was introduced to the Professor as a most successful mesmerist," I said. "I did not expect to find the séance consisting of the old Maskelyne and Cook business. You went, I presume, to amuse yourself by making a revelation of the Professor's trickery?"

Lord Aldwyn smiled his peculiarly restrained smile again, and said quietly.

"Indeed I did not. Like you, I went expecting something out of the common. When we had sat half the night with nothing more amusing going on than table-rapping and the distinctly unpleasant perambulations of a washing-glove giving one's face occasional touches, I felt driven to smoke by sheer *ennui*, and struck a match with the most innocent intentions in the world."

I laughed at the remembrance.

"The revelation of your wax-light was certainly amusing," I said, recalling the strange picture. The patient and serious-faced visitors joining fingers round the centre table making a ring of hands broken only at the gap where Lord Aldwyn had just raised his; the venerable white-bearded Professor, still bound securely in his chair in the centre of the table, where we had tied him up, but with an ordinary handbell between his teeth, which he was vigorously shaking. Above all, the new figure in the scene—a handsome girl, who stood outside the ring of devotees, manipulating the spirit hand to which we owed so many ghostly and awe-inspiring touches, in the shape of a stuffed and phosphorised glove tied on a stick.

"She had not been present at the commencement of the séance, so I suppose she must have let herself in by unlocking the door, or through a secret entrance

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prepared for the purpose. I believe we all saw her while the Marquis's match burnt, and when it went out, the devotee who had seemed to me the most deeply impressed of the lot, struck another, and insisted on lighting the lamp. Professor Vaudary calmly attempted to explain away the position, and was for passing off the lady as a spirit. She did not look unlike it in her plain, loose gown of black cashmere, with her dreamy white face.

"But his daughter, as she appeared to be, was not inclined to second his efforts. She appeared to me

Her voice charmed me.

insufferably sick of the whole business, and spoilt the poor Professor's slender chances by throwing down her spirit-hand and walking to the door to unlock it and slam it behind her, in a most human manner. Upon which poor Vaudary begged us to unbind him, and dismissed us.

"I was sorry for the poor girl," I said to my visitor. "She seemed to me an unwilling assistant to her father's trickery."

"She was," said my companion emphatically.

"And she was really beautiful!" I went on.

The Marquis smiled and bowed.

"Thank you, Dr. Favel," he said gravely; and, when I opened my eyes a little wider in questioning surprise, he added: "I have the honour of being the accepted suitor of Miss Vaudary's hand."

I concealed my surprise sufficiently to make a suitable reply, and regarded my visitor with a keener interest than before. A sensible, undeniably English-looking man of thirty or so, Lord Aldwyn seemed the last person in the world to be dragged into a *mésalliance* by any youthful or foolish infatuation.

Perhaps he read some of my thoughts in my face, for he said:

"Possibly you think, with so many people, that I have no right to please myself whom I shall marry. I have very strong views on the point."

"It is a point on which I should not think of arguing with you, my lord," I said. "Does the question on which you wish to consult me relate to Miss Vaudary?"

"Yes. How did you guess it?"

"Because her father is a mesmerist. Possibly he has brought his daughter too much under his influence in that direction, and you wish me to prescribe a cure?"

"I want your opinion, rather," said the Marquis. "Shall I proceed with my story, which I am saved the trouble of commencing by the curious coincidence of your presence when I first saw my *fiancée*?"

I bowed, and Lord Aldwyn gave his strange story between the puffs of his cheroot.

"In the little while that you saw Miss Vaudary," he began, "you were struck by her beauty. For my part I had decided in that little while that she was certainly the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. There was something in her face which attracted me strongly; and, a month later, when I returned to town and found that the Professor had left Paris on account of the exposure, and had taken up his abode in Oxford Street, I called upon him and begged to be allowed to visit the house in the character of a friend. I explained frankly that I had been much struck by his daughter's beauty, and assured him of the honesty of my motives; and the Professor, who seemed pleased by my request, gave me an invitation to dinner for that same evening, which, needless to say, I accepted.

"Miss Vaudary, in evening dress, seemed to me more beautiful than at the séance. Her voice charmed me. Her carriage and manner were the most graceful I had ever seen. In a word, I loved her. She treated me, however, with depressing coldness. It was apparent to me from the first that the scene of the previous night, at which you were present, had raised an insurmountable barrier between us. It seemed impossible for the lady to forget that she had been rendered contemptible in my presence. I thought even that she had hated me for being the means of revealing her deceit! I was certain that she had hated me for being a witness of the revelation. We were a party of three only, and the Professor (who is altogether unworthy of respect) left us alone together most of the evening; but it was hopeless for me to try and win her favour in any way. The evening made me decide that I would willingly make her my wife; it also showed me that on account of her hostility the thing was impossible.

"I informed Vaudary of this when I left. 'It is useless my calling again,' I said, 'although I must admit that I love your daughter.' I had determined to master my passion at once since it was hopeless.

"It was plain to see that the Professor was disappointed. He evidently approved of me as a son-in-law; and he made a hundred excuses for his daughter's coldness."

"And persuaded you to call once more?" I suggested.

"Yes, he assured me that Violet—that is the name of my wife-elect—was full of caprices: that a second visit

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would find her more inclined to like me. He asked me whether I had happened to give my name, or allude to my title in his daughter's presence. This is a point, I believe, which affects the question I have come to ask you."

The Marquis paused and took a longer puff than usual at his cheroot, while I stared at him, and wondered how the mention of his title could affect any question he could possibly put to me. I begged him to proceed.

"As it happened," he went on, "I had not spoken much about myself, although I distinctly understood that Vaudary had explained to his daughter who I was before my visit. From his next suggestion, however, it would appear that he had not even told her my name.

"'My daughter is an ardent democrat,' he said to me confidentially, 'if she hears your title I am afraid it may lessen your chances of winning her hand. I meant to warn you before, and it is lucky, therefore, that you have not revealed your identity. I shall take the liberty of giving you a *nommé-d'amour* when you make a second visit, and of introducing you as plain Monsieur Paul Terry.'

"'Why Paul Terry?' I asked him; and the Professor answered lightly, that it was the first name which occurred to him. 'Once gain her love, and you can easily confess to the little deception,' he went on. 'But till the first step is gained, everything depends upon not arousing her prejudices.'

"The plan seemed to me superlatively precautionary, and I should have raised objections had not Vaudary gone on to speak of other subjects. As it was, I determined, after leaving him, to insist on using, at least, my own family name—and intended to inform Vaudary of my determination on my next visit before seeing his daughter. I had succumbed to his argument, you see, and to my admiration for Miss Vaudary, and accepted another invitation to the house. The Professor fixed both day and hour—this may be an important point—a week after our interview in the evening, at the same hour as before.

"This time I did not see Vaudary at all. His daughter received me in the room where the previous meeting had been held, but which was furnished differently—in a luxurious semi-oriental manner. It was too late to raise objection to the name which the Professor had given me; for his daughter greeted me by it when I entered.

"'Good-evening, Monsieur Terry.'

"I thought it best to accept the name, and, up to the present, Miss Vaudary has known me by no other."

"Although you are engaged to marry her?" I said, as the Marquis paused.

He hastened to defend himself from what he thought was condemnation in my question.

"Our engagement dates from Thursday evening," he said—it was a Saturday when he consulted me—"On that evening I did not reveal my identity because we had so many other things to talk about. I have seen my *fiancée* only once since, under circumstances which did not allow of any confidential conversation. That meeting is the one which led me to consult Dr. Canise."

"And which brought you to me?"

"Certainly. I will describe it as fully as possible, in the hope that you can answer definitely what Canise suggested. But first I must say a few words about our meetings previous to the engagements.

"On that first evening I noticed a complete change in Miss Vaudary's manner. Where she had been cold to me, now she was friendly and even affectionate. The brilliance of her conversation and manner, with which she had charmed me before, was toned down by a luxurious dreaminess which seemed to pervade her whole demeanour, and to render her a thousand times more captivating. We got along together capitally. At our next meeting, which the Professor again arranged, it was the same. And the next.

"Our next meeting was on Thursday, when, as I said, I begged Miss Vaudary to be my wife, and received a favourable reply. Up to this point you must observe I had never seen my wife-elect except at her father's house, and at appointed meetings arranged by him. I called once without an appointment, and was told that Miss Vaudary was not at home. Yesterday, however, came the chance meeting which brings me to you.

"On the Thursday, remember, I received from Miss Vaudary every evidence of a sincere affection for me. I think there can be no doubt that when Miss Vaudary promised to be my wife, she was really and truly attached to me.

"Yesterday morning as I was crossing from the Green Park, I was delighted to see her unexpectedly. She was playing with a child, a niece of hers, I believe, whose photograph I had seen at the house. The pleasure was all the greater, because I understood that she was out of town for a few days with her father. I vaulted over the fence, at once, and of course hurried towards her. To my unutterable astonishment and dismay she received me as an almost complete stranger. She appeared genuinely indignant at the affectionate manner in which I greeted her.

"At first I thought it was some jest of hers; but it

"I vaulted over the fence."

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quickly dawned upon me that, unless she was the most accomplished actress in the world, her mind was a perfect blank with regard to our mutual affection and engagement.

"'But you do not mean to tell me,' I said to her hotly, in the midst of our talking, 'that I am a perfect stranger to you?' And she answered quietly, but with a perfectly well-bred show of displeasure, that she had certainly met me at her father's house, but that the fact did not justify me in addressing her with such impudent familiarity.

"To say that I was surprised and startled but weakly expresses the effect of this unexpected and startling change. I used every effort of which I was capable to bring back to her mind the remembrance of our love, but in vain. I left her in despair at last, wondering whether I was going mad. Madness was the only terrible explanation I could give to myself for the action of the woman I loved—I see by your expression that you have another to offer."

The Marquis paused, looking earnestly into my face, and I felt quite uncomfortable to think how much he was counting upon my opinion. I nodded my head slightly.

"Pray go on," I said. "Have you seen the lady's father since?"

Lord Aldwyn shook his head.

"No; I went to the house immediately, to express my opinion of the deception he had practised upon me, in concealing the fact of his daughter's madness. I found, however, that he had quitted London for a few days, without leaving an address to find him, or the exact date of his return. I was burning with impatience to learn the worst, and have the mystery of my *fiancée's* conduct solved. So I called upon Dr. Canise, to inquire whether the hypothesis of madness was sufficient to account for it; and he, as I said, sent me on to you.

"After hearing the whole of the details which I have repeated to you, he seemed inclined to think that, although Miss Vaudary's conduct could certainly be explained on the supposition that her mind was unhinged—a supposition which is not rendered untenable by the fact of her perfect sanity of manner at our previous meetings—still, considering the reputation of her father as a mesmerist, it was quite as likely that at each of our interviews in the Oxford Street house Miss Vaudary has been acting under the influence of her father, in some mysterious manner, without being conscious of her own actions."

"So that, in her proper self she would be totally unaware of your friendship and engagement?" I asked.

"Yes; that was what Canise threw out as a suggestion. He expressed himself, however, too ignorant of the subject to give a definite opinion as to the possibility of his hypothesis. He said that you would tell me whether it was possible that, by mesmerising his daughter before each of my visits, the Professor could make her believe that I was some totally different person, for whom she had already conceived some affection. Madness or mesmerism? that is the question I am trying to have definitely answered, though Heaven knows there is little enough hope of happiness for me in either case!"

There was a little break in the young man's voice as he said it, and I felt thoroughly sorry for him. I had been so interested in the story, as a mere problem, that I had barely considered its terrible importance to my visitor. There could be no doubt that he was thoroughly in love with the girl, and it must have been a terrible blow to him, after feeling sure of her answering love, to find that it was not a reality but an illusion.

I thought the matter over quietly, while the Marquis leant back in his chair, with closed eyes, waiting for me to give an opinion.

"There were four visits altogether," I said, "at which Miss Vaudary seemed well disposed towards you?"

The Marquis opened his eyes and nodded.

"In each case Professor Vaudary was in the house?"

"I believe so."

"At each, owing to the Professor's adroit explanation, you allowed the lady to call you by a name which is not your own?"

"Yes."

I went on to ask a few technical questions about the appearance of the lady at the four interviews—the state of the pupil of her eye, and so on—to which the Marquis answered promptly. Then when I had concluded my little cross-examination, I gave my decision in favour of mesmerism.

"I think you may take it for a certainty, my lord," I said, "that to prevent such an eligible son-in-law as yourself from eluding his grasp, Professor Vaudary has used this mesmeric influence he evidently exercises over his daughter to assist your love-making. The thing is quite possible. It is simply a clever variation of an old mesmeric performance. You have seen, no doubt, the disgusting exhibition which professional mesmerists give—a man eating the most noxious things under the impression that they are the most pleasing?"

"Yes," said Aldwyn grimly; "I once saw a man devour a tallow candle greedily thinking it sugar-candy. In the present case, I suppose I am the candle?"

"Exactly."

"And the sugar-candy which mademoiselle imagines herself to be enjoying is some gentleman called Paul Terry? I presume that such a person must necessarily exist?"

"I believe so."

The young man's mouth was tightly compressed, as if he had difficulty in hiding his feelings. He took up his hat to go.

"I shall take your opinion as decisive," he said.

But I was by no means inclined to let slip a case which interested me so much as this did until I had thoroughly mastered it.

"I hope you do not object to my communicating with Professor Vaudary," I said, "with respect to this remarkable example of his mesmeric influence? I shall not feel quite satisfied about it until I have had an interview with him."

"Nor I," said the Marquis. "If it would not interfere with your inquiries, I should very much like to see Vaudary in your company. You will get out of him all the vital points of the business."

"There is nothing which would please me better," I said. "Your presence will give me all the authority I need to probe the affair to the bottom."

It was arranged, therefore, before we parted, that on a certain day in the week following our interview, we should meet at Lord Aldwyn's place in Grosvenor Square, and proceed together to Vaudary's house in the hope of finding him returned from his journey.

At Professor Vaudary's house we were luckier than we expected. The old man opened the door for us himself, and ushered us into his study to hear what we had come about. I put it to him plainly that he was mesmerising his daughter!

At first he was inclined to express great surprise at the suggestion, but Aldwyn cut him short.

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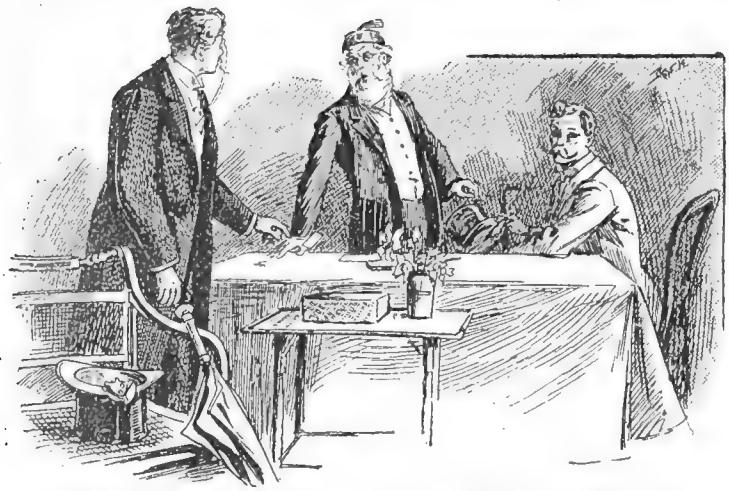
"Your manner proves well enough," he said quietly, "if any proof were needed, that Dr. Favel has stated the case correctly. You may spare yourself, therefore, the trouble of trying to hide the true facts of the case. I have only a few questions to ask before I decide what course I shall take in the matter. In the first place, who is Paul Terry?"

The Professor asseverated warmly that no such person existed. He had suggested the name simply as the first which occurred to him. It was a name only, and had no connection with any actual person. He grew quite hot in his denials, and used every emphatic gesture, I believe, of which he was capable, in his efforts to convince my companion of the truth of his assertions.

Meanwhile, I was turning over the bits of pasteboard in the Professor's card-basket, which stood on a little table at my side, hardly expecting to meet any reward for my trouble, but finding nothing better to do, since Lord Aldwyn had taken the conduct of the case into



"Flicked across to him the result of my search in the card-basket."

his own hands, and the Professor had ceased to notice my presence.

The latter was becoming more and more emphatic in his denial of Paul Terry's existence. When I looked up it struck me that Lord Aldwyn was becoming impressed by his vehemence.

"Look here, my man," he said, "let us drop this strong language; will you give me your word of honour that no such person as Paul Terry exists?"

The Professor was quite ready to do so. He opened his mouth with the evident intention of forswearing himself. But I stopped him.

"One moment, Professor, before you perjure yourself," I said, and flicked across to him the result of my search in the card-basket—a card with the name of "Paul Terry" engraved upon it, and an address in Paris.

Of course, denial was futile after that. The poor Professor gave in ignominiously; and, after trying to persuade us that he had *forgotten* that Terry was an actual person he expressed his willingness to tell us the real facts of the case without reserve. He seemed almost sincere at last; and, after warning him of the futility of making any more mis-statements, the Marquis showed some eagerness to hear what he had to say.

It seemed that Paul Terry was a certain young artist in Paris, who had called upon the Professor to make some inquiries after a séance he had attended. During the absence of Vaudary, his daughter had entertained the visitor, and the young people appeared to have become very interested in each other in the course of an hour or so's conversation.

"It was a case of love at first sight," said the Professor "and after making some inquiries with regard to the young artist's character and position, I decided to invite him to the house. Judge of my grief and disappointment then, when my note of invitation was returned by the *concierge* of the house where Terry lived, with the information that the poor young fellow had died suddenly of heart-disease on the day after his visit to my house."

Lord Aldwyn started.

"He is dead?" he asked earnestly; but the Professor seemed not to notice the slight interruption, and proceeded:

"I hesitated to tell the news to poor Violet, knowing that she had been deeply struck by the excellent fellow's manner, even in their one interview. Then came your very flattering declaration, my lord, with regard to your admiration of my poor little girl, which I will confess filled my heart with the most ambitious of hopes.

"At your first interview with Violet, however, I perceived that the memory of the young painter prevented her giving any attention to your advances. Under the circumstances, therefore, I am sure you will pardon the deception which a father's love and care for his beloved daughter's happiness suggested. If Paul Terry had been alive I should not have hesitated to inform you of the hopelessness of your suit. But knowing that he was dead, it seemed to me a duty to prevent my poor girl wasting all her chances of happiness in thinking of him. I absolutely could not see her throw away the brilliant prospect offered by your regard. Before me shone the affectionate hope of gradually transferring to yourself the preference she had given to another. I assure you, gentlemen, that my motives were entirely unselfish. I hoped to benefit all parties; to save my girl from a hopeless passion, and to satisfy your own wishes, my lord."

The wicked old man looked quite holy as he placed one hand on his heart and looked upwards. My companion recalled him to sublunary things with a quick, eager question.

"You speak of transferring to me your daughter's affection. Is that possible by any manner of mesmerism?"

"I believe so, my lord. At any rate, I thought the experiment worth making."

"And did not care a farthing whether it succeeded, so long as I married—or kept—your daughter," put in Aldwyn quickly.

"What is *your* opinion about the transfer of affection?" he asked, turning to me.

The idea was so novel that I did not venture to express an opinion; but the Professor was anxious to persuade us of its possibility.

"Look at the theory of hypnotic cure," he said, speaking as if he were at a lecture. "It depends upon throwing both patient and medium into a mesmeric trance, and transferring the affection from one to the other. In

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time the change becomes permanent, as far as the patient is concerned."

Aldwyn cut him short again.

"You can swear that Paul Terry is really dead?" he said sternly. "You are not lying?"

The Professor was indignant at this suggestion.

"It does not matter," said Aldwyn, "we have his address on this card. Now, one more question: suppose I refuse to accept your very kind services on my behalf, what course do you intend to pursue?"

The old man rubbed his patriarchal beard and glanced furtively at the questioner. Then, with some knowledge of human nature, he replied candidly:

"I have others to take your place, my lord."

My companion looked for a moment as if he meditated an attack on the holy-looking man of science. He contented himself with a strong curse, however, and then returned to his quiet, questioning manner.

"Excuse me asking the question," he said, "but is it possible that you thought you could marry me to your daughter without her knowledge?"

"I could engage to do so," said the Professor with a superior smile. "There would have been a difficulty about the name, of course, if I attempted to carry it through without your knowing the true state of affairs. But with your connivance in that small matter, I have not the slightest doubt that my mesmeric influence over

Placed one hand on his heart and looked upwards.

my daughter is such that I could make her marry any man I pleased, under the impression that she was marrying the man of her choice. Will you allow me to prove my words, my lord, or shall I find another bridegroom?"

I noticed that his manner had entirely changed since he had seen how Aldwyn took the threat of marrying his daughter to somebody else. However, I was surprised at the Marquis's next words.

"After the marriage, I presume, your daughter would wake up entirely unconscious of the ceremony she had gone through?"

"Yes, my lord."

"Then you may continue to use your influence over your daughter, you confounded scamp! and to count upon me as a son-in-law."

I felt bound to expostulate a little; but the self-willed young aristocrat stopped me almost as he had stopped the Professor—only with more show of politeness.

"Thanks to your valuable assistance, Dr. Favel," he said, with perfect courtesy of manner, "I think I can now see through the case quite clearly. I hope I may consult you again, if anything turns up which I am unable to understand. For the present I know all I need to go on with the affair."

I did not attempt expostulation after that; and, as I was evidently more of a hindrance than a help to the negotiations between the two men, I ventured to take my leave, wondering how on earth this strange business would turn out.

* * * * *

I was afraid, when I received an unexpectedly large cheque from Lord Aldwyn, on the day after our visit to Oxford Street, that all my connection with his extraordinary love-story had ceased. I was very sorry, because I was deeply interested in it, and should have liked to see its full devolopment; but I felt that I should scarcely be justified in inquiring for news on the point from either Professor Vaudary or the Marquis. I felt very inclined, however, as time went on, and I heard nothing, to call upon the Professor on some pretext or other, and learn whether Aldwyn had actually married his daughter, as he had seemed determined to do.

Possibly I should have called eventually, had I not seen in a spiritualist organ a notice of the Professor's death, which occurred a few months after our visit to him.

The short article, unfortunately, did not allude to the Professor's family at all, so I could gain from it no news of Miss Violet.

It seemed to me that I had lost my only chance of gaining any. Evidently the Marquis was a man who did not care to bother other people very much about his private affairs. Only an impatient eagerness to get at the truth had driven him to make his first confidences to me, and, after he had remunerated me for my opinion, which certainly was not worth the remuneration, I did not expect to have any more revelations from his lips.

Of course, I made a few indirect inquiries from people who were likely to have some acquaintance with the Marquis's movements, and with a view to ascertaining whether anything was known of his marriage; but all I could learn about him was that he had disappeared from England, and was supposed to be living abroad—nobody knew exactly where.

As it happened, I was the first person to learn where that foreign retreat of Lord Aldwyn's was—Dildac—a quaint little country place in the heart of the Champagne country; and I learnt it from Aldwyn himself.

Just as I had given up all hope of hearing anything about him, I was delightedly surprised to get a note from him asking me to come down to Dildac for a little while, to look after the health of his mother, which seemed to him very unsatisfactory. He expressed the

hope that I should be able to get away from London, said that I should find the Champagne village a delightful change if I was at all fond of the country, and mentioned that he had taken an old château there, and could give me any amount of room for myself during my professional attendance on his mother. Not a word was said about my former services, nor was there the remotest mention in his letter of Professor Vaudary's daughter. However, it was not likely that I could meet the Marquis again without learning something about her; so you may guess that I accepted Aldwyn's offer with all speed, and began to make preparations at once for my journey to the other side of France.

Dildac was a charming little place, truly—a nest of white cottages among miles of vineyards, with the green hills of Aspequille behind.

There was nobody to meet me when the lazy train loitered into the little wooden station. It was hardly worth while sending to meet me, when my arrival was so uncertain and the château was so near. I could see its stone turrets rising behind the poplars when I stepped out on to the platform of the little wooden station. The fact tempted me, after leaving my luggage to the tender mercies of the station-master, to try and find my way to my destination without making inquiries.

I wandered along the white road between the vineyards wondering whether I should learn anything about Miss Vaudary, or find her settled as mistress of the château when I arrived there. To do the latter turned out a more difficult task than I imagined. As soon as I descended from the station to the road the view of the turrets was lost; and, although I had started in the direction in which I had thought the château would lie, still every turn in the road seemed to take me away from that direction.

I began to wish that I had asked my way at the station, especially as I met nobody of whom I could inquire. It was questionable, too, even if I did meet anybody whether I could make myself understood. My French serves me badly in Paris! I seriously doubted its success in the provinces. I stepped briskly along the road, getting more certain at every turn that I was going wrong.

The château, as far as I remembered, lay to the left, the road turned determinately to the right. At last, however, I came to a footpath leading away leftwards, and ornamented with a decrepid and undecipherable finger-post, the dumb leading of which I followed without hesitation. Still, I was not so certain of my way that I could afford to despise guidance; so when I saw a woman walking slowly along the path in front of me, I prepared a sentence in my best French, to inquire whether I was really on my way to the château of Dildac. I was pleased to notice, on getting nearer, that the person's dress and gait betokened her a lady, since, as I said, I doubt the efficacy of my accent among the country people

"Pardonnez-moi, madame."

in making my meaning understood. It occurred to my mind, of course, that I might be near the discovery of another chapter in Lord Aldwyn's love-story, and that this might be his wife.

The lady must have been deep in thought, whoever she was, for she did not notice my step even when I was close upon her.

"*Pardonnez-moi, madame,*" I began, raising my hat; but no further strain on my knowledge of the vernacular was necessary, for, as I spoke the three words, the lady turned her face with a slight start, and I saw, as I was more or less prepared to do, that it was a face I knew—that of Professor Vaudary's daughter. There was no mistaking that beautiful oval, with its large, lustrous eyes, and frame of black hair, although the cheeks which had been so white at the séance had a touch of colour in them under their healthy, country-made brown.

I inquired, in English, if I were on the way to the château, and the lady held out her hand.

(*To be concluded.*)

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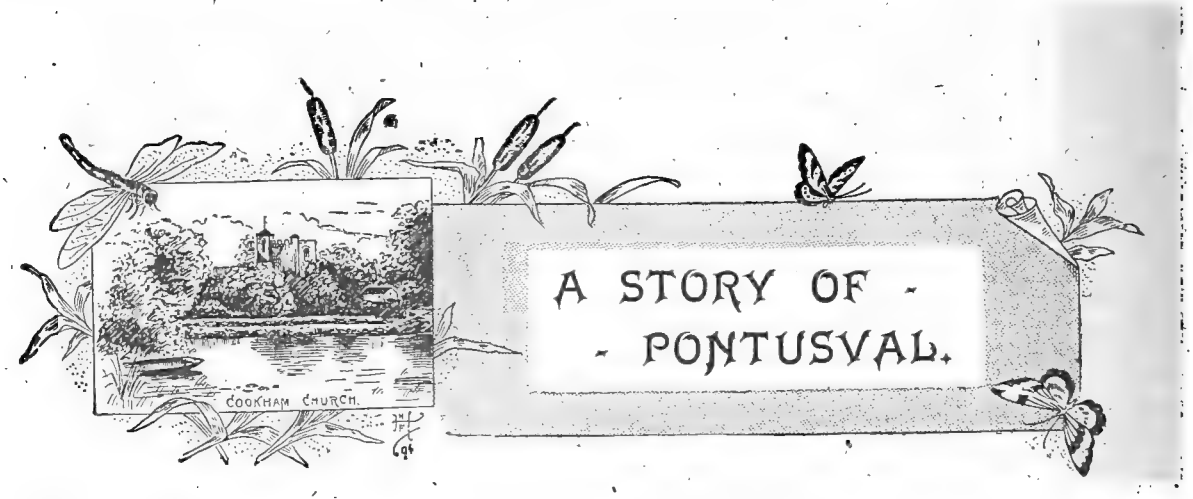

"Father!—Father!"

The clear but breathless voice of a woman rose above the howling of the wind and the roaring of the waves.

Then, after other cries, which the storm carried away from them and which they could not distinguish, a scrap of a sentence reached them through the tumult of the air, imperative and intreating: "Ship—in peril—at Penn Leach ven——"

The news fell like a thunderbolt on the fishermen.

Standing in disheartened groups along the shore near Keravesan, the north side of the port of Pontusval, they watched with passive and resigned looks the storm from the N.E., which had come so suddenly in the morning, continued all day, and now towards night showed every sign of increasing still more.

"A ship in peril."

They showed their terror at these words in different ways. While the young men seemed to defy the fury of the waves by appealing to courage and duty, their chests heaving under the bravery of their hearts, from the dried and rugged lips of some of the old men the same words were strangled by the dread roar of the rollers on the beach and the knowledge of the awful danger they were in.

With her cap half blown off and her arm tragically pointing to the north, a young girl, whose fair golden hair formed a bright halo round her head, ran towards them, throwing herself into the arms of one of the fishermen as into a haven of refuge—a man with massive shoulders and grey hair under his cap of coarse wool.

"What is the matter? Where have you come from?" he asked tenderly.

"From the lighthouse at Pontusval, father, where I went to see my friend, the signalman's daughter. And then—then——"

Her emotion overcame her, and her words were drowned by her sobs.

"Father—oh, it is horrible. Over there, I saw this poor ship in distress—on the rocks of Penn Leach ven. And at this hour. God grant there may yet be time. All must hurry to the rescue!"

"On the rocks? Then there's a poor chance for her!" declared one of the fishermen.

Another, shaking his head and crossing his arms, as if to assert the uselessness of any effort on their part, muttered:

'Yes, yes, that is true. Our rocks there take only a few minutes to break up any ship, however big. It has happened many a time."

Then above the tumult of the sea, a phrase in the old dialect of Leon, in the famous "Land of Pagans," as this part of Finistère is often called, sounded mournfully:

"Wreckage on the coast!"

These words caused a great hubbub. There were sounds of cursing, of approval and of anger, a rapid exchange of arguments for and against, in the midst of which, arm-in-arm, walked the fisherman and his daughter.

But now that the others had picked up this ominous rallying cry of former times, the souls of the wreckers were swelling with recollections of pillage and with a hope of a return to the atrocities of the past, and they muttered in pleased accents:

"Wreckage on the coast!"

Then William Madec, disengaging himself from Jeanne-Marie, and trembling with indignation, threw his cap behind him, showing his massive head, his honest and frank eyes, the face of a sturdy fisherman, and in answer to the cry of the wreckers he gave the cry of the godly:

"To the lifeboat!"

Leading the way impatiently, with rapid strides, to the small red-roofed house a little distance off, he added:

"We will see which of us is right this time."

Carried away by his example, those behind followed him, repeating with enthusiasm, as if in defiance to the sea, and to those who had dared to invoke the barbarous customs of their ancestors:

"The lifeboat! The lifeboat!"

Young, old, women, children, all had rushed in great haste to the little lifeboat house; with the assistance of ropes and the combined help of a heavy waggon, the lifeboat was quickly brought out and taken towards the sea.

"Oh, hisse! Ah! Oh! Ah! Holla! Oh, hisse! Ah! Oh! Ah! Holla!" they sang as they pulled in unison. And everyone joined in, from the treble voices of the children, to the bass notes of the men.

A little way off the other group of older men had gathered, drawn together by a common understanding and a common purpose. Very different scenes came to their minds. Instead of a lifeboat as the centre of all,

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they saw the people armed with boat-hooks, hatchets, fish-spears, and ropes, all the tools for plunder and murder.

They looked on with disappointment at the preparations to spoil them of their prey.

From this group a grumble of revolt arose, growing louder as the lifeboat neared the water, and when the crew, clad in tarpaulins and sou'-westers, appeared with William Madec at their head, a cry burst forth:

"To the wreck!"

It was the same harsh and piercing voice, so loud that it was distinctly heard above the howling of the tempest, and the "Oh, hisss! Ah! Oh!" of the workers.

He stood up, this defender of heathenish rites, continuing:

"It is our bread that they want to take from us. The sea destroys for us. No one can take from us what it brings. It is for us the Penn Leach works, and all the rocks and islands, too!"

In front of the others, well in view, the strange old man who had uttered these words stood defiant.

Though almost a centenarian, he was always to the fore in a storm. He always came, robust and straight, his white hair falling over his shoulders, with his black eyes which age had not dulled, his nose like the beak of a bird of prey.

"Oh, Heaven! Hervé Raguénes! It is always him. May the Lord protect the poor sailors!" cried Jeanne-Marie Madec in terror.

And while the young people, continuing their preparations for rescue, did not deign to respond, the old men threw evil glances at them, brandishing their boat-hooks menacingly. However, the boat was just being launched, when one of the men cried: "Captain William, there is a man short on the larboard."

As no one volunteered to take the place, a young man, of a tall and athletic figure, breathless with his long run to the scene of action, caught hold of the planking, drew himself up by the strength of his wrists, and jumped on board, saying:

"There. You can go ahead, the crew is complete."

Stupefied, William Madec looked at him, demanding:

"You, Alain? But you do not join our party, I think?"

"You won't have me?" said the new-comer in a pleading tone.

Jeanne-Marie, her face lit up with joy, murmured:

"Father, I beg you."

His eyes fixed themselves with candid admiration on the young man, who, without waiting for the captain's answer, had seized a life-belt and put it on. William, with a smile on his lips, held out his hand to the new arrival, when the rough voice of the old man shouted furiously:

"Where are you going, you, now? Who gave you leave?"

The young man suddenly became pale on hearing this brutal question, and, turning, stammered:

"Grandfather! Like the others, to the rescue. The others!"

A horrible laugh came from the withered lips of Raguénes.

"The others!—ha! ha! ha! There are no more of our blood, the old blood of the Pagans. As for you, you are a Raguénes, the last living Raguénes with me, a Pagan like me. It is not to the rescue you must go, but to the wreck."

"But, grandfather—the poor people who are in danger. I pray you."

"It is God who has sent them to us; we mustn't interfere with His will."

All the fatalism of his race flamed in this savage speech.

The captain leant towards his daughter, exchanging some words with her, then, lifting up his head, addressed the terrible old man:

"Hervé Raguénes, the ship in danger is English again."

The old man, recoiling a step, did not wait for the attack, but with an instinctive movement of revolt added:

"A heretic."

Madec said slowly:

"Do you remember the Drummer?"

"Ann Taboulinn."

The name trembled on the lips of Raguénes, and half stifled with rage he made a threatening gesture in the direction of Alain.

Into the troubled waters the boat went on its way to save those in peril on Penn Leach ven.

* * * * *

A slab of stone served as the door, and it needed a great exercise of muscle to open it. It was opened and shut again, and by the light of an enormous ship's lantern the weird face of Hervé Raguénes could be seen.

He sat down amidst strange surroundings, broken open cases, staved casks, fragments of wood, of iron, of steel, fishing utensils, arms, provisions, lovely pieces of china, massive pieces of timber, spoil from many a wreck. By the remains of letters visible on certain boards one could almost make a list of the wrecks which for sixty-five years there had been on this coast.

This was the house of Raguénes, this cave which had been dug in the rock by prehistoric man, and had served as a burial place for the ancient inhabitants of the country to judge by the litter of bones about.

He had found this retreat by chance, and now in his old age he had left the house of his only living relation Alain, to live away from everyone in this cave.

In old times he had been able to stow here many of his treasures, and could accumulate what he would without fear of the police. Anger burnt in his heart, for now they saved the ships in peril.

He sat by his wood fire brooding, listening instinctively to the howling of the wind as it swept along the coast with the fury of a wild beast, and the roaring of the waves as they dashed against the rocks.

And thus it was that, in the faithful mirror of his brain, he saw reflected many such nights and days of storm from which he had reaped such a rich harvest.

Oh, this lifeboat of to-day! How the times had changed! How the race had degenerated! His grandson, blood of his blood, was on the sea, not to enrich himself with spoil, but to save unknown beings, strangers, Englishmen.

To save Englishmen, a Raguénes, a Pagan! If he could do as in former times!

"Do you remember the Drummer?"

It was William Madec, one of the rescuers, who had said these words.

He remembered well, and the whole scene passed before him.

It was a long time ago. He tried to count on his fingers twenty, thirty, at least forty years. There, quite close, in the middle of the crypt, he could see the *débris* of the

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frigate, an English frigate, did they say? Well, they had nothing to prove its nationality.

It was a night like this, a storm from the north-east with thunder and lightning.

He, Hervé Raguénes, with some of his boon companions, had started off to Brignaugan, when there sounded across the waves the boom of a cannon.

At the same time someone from the beach had distinguished a ship, still free, and, perhaps, thanks to the lightning, able to keep out of the breakers and regain the high sea.

Then Hervé ran to his house and returned dragging the finest bull in his drove: his companions clustered around, applauding and helping him to drive the frightened animal towards the shore.

When they reached the beach, Hervé lighted a big ship's lantern, which he had fastened to the animal's head, between the horns, with a rope, one end of which was tied to one of its front legs, long enough to allow the beast to walk, but sufficiently short to oblige it to lower its head at each step.

And then he guided the animal along the shore: at each step the head of the bull went down and up again, making the lantern oscillate to imitate the light of a pitching ship.

Almost at once the sound of the cannon came nearer, showing that the ship, instead of continuing on her course out to sea, was approaching the shore under the belief that safety lay in that direction.

By the flashes of lightning which became more frequent as the storm increased, they could distinguish a frigate, sailing under its lower sails, one mast broken and its head fully on Penn Leach ven.

Doubtless at the same moment the sailors also saw the danger into which they were running, for a horrified cry came over the intervening space. To this death cry a roar of joy answered from the beach, and all raised their hooks and their hatchets, while Raguénes put out the lantern, freed the animal's leg, and waited while the sea did its work of destruction.

A last flash showed them the ship breaking amongst the rocks, and calling all the plunderers to their prey, the cry resounded:

"Wreckage on the coast!"

It was a famous windfall, some ship from the colonies laden with spices, precious clothes, and with chests of silver.

And of all that were washed ashore that night, there was not one living soul.

In the morning, further along the coast, close to a big rock, which stood alone in the middle of the beach, they found a huge corpse, half-clad in the remnants of a uniform that it was impossible to recognise.

But what aroused their curiosity most was that the giant carried at his side a drum fastened by a strong belt. Evidently this acted as a buoy and prevented him from totally disappearing like his comrades.

The first of them who had noticed him, and who had knelt down to strip him, stood up suddenly with a cry of astonishment, holding up a child, a little girl of a year or more, fastened to the drum, and still living.

He was going to throw her back into the sea, or kill her with a blow on the head with his hook, when one of his neighbours, seizing his hands, declared:

"I will take it. It shall be my care."

A man unlike the others, this Yves Madec, the father of William Madec, and one who was always reproached for his tender-heartedness.

"Can't you leave her to return to where she came from, the little heretic?' Hervé Raguénes had called to him mockingly.

"I will make her a Christian for her good, and ours," replied Yves Madec, adding in a low voice, "for the redemption of our sins."

He went away carrying the little heretic, the little English woman, "*Saoz bihan*" as the other Pagans around him said, with the horror which they professed, and which some of them had, for the English, personified in their eyes.

As for the man with the drum, instead of carrying him to consecrated ground, they buried him where he was found, at the foot of the gigantic rock, which has since been known as "the Drummer's Rock."

The incident seemed to have ended here, and little by little was being completely forgotten, when a disquieting rumour, which began among the fishermen went round, affirming that on certain stormy days, when the sky was over-cast, on the deserted beach there could be heard the roll of the drum. The ghost of the drummer arose and beat on the instrument which had been buried with him.

From one to another the story was repeated, and soon, especially in the evenings, no one dared pass the rock without hastening their steps and crossing themselves with fear. Perhaps they had done wrong to bury him there without the sacrament, and it was these prayers he came to claim with the roll of the drum.

When this rumour reached the ears of Hervé Raguénes, he refused to believe it. He sneered:

"Their drummer, ha, ha! It is alcohol or cider which disturbs their senses, and makes them think thunder is the beat of a drum. Ah, well." And he listened with a shrug of his shoulders.

Outside, the storm continued to increase as the night came on. Hearing the significant roaring, the old man rubbed his hands with a pleased gesture, while a smile of satisfaction spread over his face, as he muttered:

"In a little while there will be more than a drummer on the beach. Ah! Ah! Spoil! Spoil! The sea, the rocks, the anger of God, all is for us!"

Then as he went to extinguish the lantern preparatory to lying down on a mass of seaweed, which served as his bed, he heard the sound of steps approaching, and seizing his boat-hook he stood in the entrance of the grotto, demanding:

"Who is there?—Who dares——?"

The profile of a young man was discernible by the pale light of the dawn: a head appeared, with eyes shining with joy.

"Is it you, Alain?"

He dared ask no more, divining at once the cause of his joy.

The other exclaimed in a glad voice:

"Grandfather! All saved!"

Raguénes groaned:

"Saved! The English heretics!"

"Shipwrecked, poor exhausted sailors, frozen with cold, creatures of God like us," corrected the young man. "If you had seen them, you would have pitied them."

He had come inside the grotto, and stood nervously twisting his cap.

"I want to ask you something—that is, I have had a confession to make to you, for—for a long time. But I have not had the promise until to-day; then I am old enough to settle down. I——"

The old man looked at him savagely, and asked harshly:

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"You aren't content as you are? That is your fault, what then?"

The grandson hesitated, then he said:

"I love a young girl, and I wish to marry her."

Hervé suggested sweetly:

"You have made your choice alone; doubtless it is good, as you haven't consulted me. Perhaps, then, it is the daughter of Lanlo, who is one of the old school, like me. If it is she, my son——"

Alain interrupted coldly:

"No, it isn't Yvonne Lanlo, it is Jeanne-Marie Madec."

The old man glared at his grandson in a fury.

"She? '*Saoz bihan*,' the little English heretic!"

"The little English girl," Alain stammered. "But she is Breton, the daughter of William——"

"Ah! Ah! I don't doubt it. And it was for that William Madec took you in his crew. And you want my consent? Never. Never while I live shall a Raguénes marry a heretic. Do you hear? I would rather see you dead," he added, "than married to her. Go and ask her hand from the drummer."

* * * * *

"I love you with all my heart, more than life, and I beg that if you love me in the same way, you will be my wife. You still wish it, Jeanne-Marie, in spite of the name I bear, in spite of all I have told you, in spite of my grandfather?"

Alain was tenderly holding her trembling fingers in his hands as he was pleading. It was some days after the wreck, as evening was approaching. They had met near the Drummer's Rock with a touching superstition, as if they wished him to be a witness of their love, and of their engagement, as she was the daughter of the little stray, rescued by Yves Madec, forty years ago.

Alain remembered the jeering phrase of his grandfather:

"Go and ask her hand from the drummer."

Slowly night enveloped all in a veil of mystery.

Jeanne-Marie, yielding to the dictates of her heart, and the persuasions of her companion, confessed:

"I love you, Alain, and I will be your wife, I promise you."

A burst of savage laughter sounded so suddenly behind them that they turned simultaneously: and there, shaking his hook, with which he was always armed, at the terrified young people, stood Hervé Raguénes.

"And I," he said, "I swear that a grandson of mine shall never marry you."

With a spring, Alain threw himself instinctively between the old man and the young girl, guarding the latter with his arms, saying:

"Grandfather! Take care."

In his tone, at first supplicating and then commanding, you could recognise his ancestry.

The old man advanced threateningly.

"I will send her whence she came, this heretic. I will——"

Step by step he approached, his eyes aflame with the light of murder, the fixed idea of his hard cruel heart showed in his stony face. Without arms to defend her, hesitating to strike his own grandfather, Alain stood before him. Flight was impossible, they were between Hervé Raguénes and the sea, between him and the Drummer's Rock, towards which they recoiled.

Possessed by this bloodthirsty folly, a homicidal laugh on his lips, the old man came on.

Suddenly a long rumbling sounded, as if the anger of Heaven was let loose.

The grandfather gave a chuckle.

"It thunders now, as in the days of wrecks. Wreckage on the coast. God is for us."

But now the rumbling came nearer and more regular, as if by some mystery an invisible drum was being beaten.

Hervé stopped:

"It sounds odd this evening, all the same. Perhaps a fresh scheme of the good God. It doesn't matter——"

The noise seemed to approach them and envelop them in its sonorous waves, as in the winding sheet of death.

All three looked at each other, the blood left their faces, their bodies became rigid, and they heard the old man stammer:

"The Drummer's Rock!"

Still the beating continued.

The lips of the old man muttered:

"Do you not hear the Drummer?"

And as they looked the Drummer's Rock seemed to move and advance towards them.

Terrified, haggard, Hervé Raguénes saw the giant rise before him, his drum at his side, monstrous, living, terrible, as high as the rock itself, always sounding his drum like the rumbling of thunder.

While Jeanne-Marie and Alain, mute with terror, tried to distinguish what was happening under the moving pall of darkness, the old man, his hook fallen on the ground, his two arms stretched out towards the rock, his heart full of remorse, exclaimed:

"The Drummer himself! It is he! He comes! I will——"

His legs gave way beneath him and he fell to his knees on the sand, vanquished, supplicating:

"Mercy! Pardon! I consent!"

As the words passed his lips, the rumblings diminished, receding, dying away with a final roar in the unfathomable depth of the night.

It was Alain and Jeanne-Marie who brought back the redoubtable Pagan. He had become as feeble as a little child.

While they helped him to walk, he called to memory again and again what he had heard and seen, he, who had never believed the stories of the fishermen.

"It is true, this drum. I have heard it. I have seen."

These incoherent phrases escaped him from time to time.

"It is necessary—prayers—repose of his soul—a cross."

* * * * *

A month later the marriage between Alain Raguénes and Jeanne-Marie Madec was celebrated.

For the occasion, old Hervé Ruguénes, whose brain never recovered its balance, but whose figure was as upright and imposing as ever, put on the ancient holiday costume of the Pagans.

After the Mass, all the congregation with the clergy repaired to the beach to witness the ceremony of placing a cross in front of the Drummer's Rock, which can be seen to this day. Since then, no one has heard the beating of the drum, as if the sanctification of his grave and the marriage of Alain and Jeanne-Marie had given eternal rest to the unknown buried under the rock.

M. E.

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A Wedding Tombstone.

"So you never heard of Mary Barbour's weddin' tombstone?" said grandma in a tone of surprise. "I thought everybody knew about that."

I confessed the most abject ignorance, and immediately drew up to the fire. This was partly to gain information and partly because, although the fireplace was wide and deep-throated, and big logs were blazing in it, there were biting draughts of stinging November air coming in at the loosely-fitting door. For grandmother would not be persuaded to leave the home that had been hers for fifty years, and which now showed some signs of decay.

She sat knitting by the firelight, for, although she had all the modern conveniences of heating and lighting, her big fireplace cast its ruddy glow out into the room through all the long winter evenings. I was an angular schoolgirl of fifteen then, with a great love for the romantic, and was on a four weeks' visit at the old homestead. After knitting a few minutes in silence, she began:

"You've seen the old stone house down on the bank of the river, all shut in with pines and evergreens? It's nigh a hundred years old. When I was born it had been built ten years. When I was a young married woman the Barbours came to live there, and they was proud, 'aughty people that nobody could get acquainted with. That's what made 'em take it so dretful hard when—but here I am, ahead of my story. You see, Mr. Barbour embezzled or did something of that kind, and went to prison. After he had been there a year he up and hung himself, and that is the last of him so far as my story goes.

"Then his wife and little boy shut themselves up in the stone house and never went outside the gate hardly. She'd had a good deal of schooling, his mother had, and she taught him herself as long as she could, and then he bought books and studied by himself. He tried going to school when he was a small boy, but one of the scholars threw it at him about his father, and Mortimer nearly killed him, and after that his mother kep' him home.

And she was such a proud woman, was Mrs. Barbour, and lofty and severe in her ways. She wouldn't let nobody sympathise with her, which everybody wanted to, as there's so little going on in a place like this.

"Mrs. Barbour was real selfish with her grief, so she got herself disliked, besides folks bein' suspicious after the way her husband turned out. What did they live on?

"Oh, the boy farmed it, and later they do say he wrote books on what they called natural history, though to my mind it was the most natural stuff I ever heard tell of—all about beetles and flies with three hundred muscles in their heads, and as could carry twelve hundred times their own weight on their own backs, which everybody knows he must have got up as he went along.

"They were dretfully taken up with each other, he and his mother, and she believed everything he said was so, even about the flies and beetles. But she was his own mother, and that explains it.

"When she died Mortimer went well-nigh crazy. He planted her grave with vi'lets and pansies, and at the head was a white marble monument he had gone to the city for—nothing nearer would suit him. But he didn't display no taste. Nothing on it, my dear, but the old lady's name and the date she died—not an angel, nor a cherub, or a lamb, or a broken rose-bud, nor a bit of verse. And yet he always seemed to set store by her.

"Then Mortimer, he just stuck to the old house, same as ever, though now he was alone. I used to wonder how it seemed to him late at night hearin' the swash of the river and the sighin' of them pine trees. He wore his hair long, as was the custom in them days, and it was curly up at the ends, like the picture of John Wesley. But he had eyes that went right through you and came out the back of your head. And he never set foot into the meeting-house nohow.

"Now, he was the last man in the village I'd ever said would got married. But as sure as you set there, when the little milliner, Mary McAllister, came into the place he was struck. That wasn't nothing strange—all the young fellows was—but, mind you, *she was struck, too.* No, you wouldn't 'a' thought it.

"Everybody warned her, and told her about his fathers' hangin' himself in prison, and how queer his mother was, and that Mortimer was as old as Dick's hatband and wouldn't come to no good. She listened, with her eyes big and cool and a little hot patch of red on her cheeks like a daub of paint, but she never said a word.

"That was Mary McAllister all over, never to say a blessed word, but go and do just as she saw fit. First we knew they was engaged, and it was given out in meeting. Next day her aunt she lived with came in to

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see me, and wrung her hands, sayin' she wouldn't be surprised if Mary was murdered before the year was out. What can you think of a man who lives like a hermit, and had a crooked father and a peculiar mother?

"But we wasn't prepared for the worst. A day or two before the wedding, in comes old Mrs. Johnson, and says:

"'Shut up the doors tight,' says she, 'and the winders. I've got something to tell you that'll make your hair rise up,' she says, whisperin' like.

"So I shut the door, she a-workin' her hands together like one possessed.

"'It's about Mary,' she went on.

"'He's been and got a tombstone for her.'

"'Who?' asked I, as if I didn't know, but my knees knocked together and I felt a bit sick.

"'Mortimer Barbour,' says she. 'My grandson, Johnnie, was after a bird's nest in a tree over in his yard. The limb broke, and down he went right on to the roof of the old outhouse, that hasn't been used for years. It went in under him like tinder, and as soon as he could pick himself up and found no bones broke, what should he see but a new white gravestone, a-settin' up in a corner against some rubbish. He went up to it, and he says as true as the Bible he saw "Mary Barbour," cut on it, and the date she is a-goin' to die.'

"'I don't believe it,' says I, but I was all a-faint, and had to go and make us each a cup of tea so we could bear up under it.

"As soon as I said I didn't believe it, Mrs. Johnson said we'd go ourselves and see. And we did go, Mortimer bein' away in the fields, and got into the outhouse. It was towards dark, and we shook with the cold, though it was a warm day in June. We'd brought a bit of candle with us, and Mrs. Johnson lit it, and then we saw —good gracious, child, how scairt you look; don't get so near the fire, you'll be all ablaze. Where was I? Oh, we saw the stone just as Johnnie said, a real gravestone of white marble, and on it the name 'Mary Barbour,' with the date 'Sept 5, 18—,' below it. But the rest we couldn't make out.

"'He's going to let her live three months, may Heaven forgive him,' says old Mrs. Johnson, meanin' different from what she said.

"The next day I went to Mary, and told her the whole truth! And would you believe it, she said she thought Mrs. Johnson and I had no business prying about other people's affairs? 'If he had bought me a thousand gravestones I'd have him just the same,' says she. So they was married the next day, but Mary was white as a ghost, and she trembled so she could hardly walk.

"They went right away, and we threw some old shoes after 'em, but all the wishin' of joy was make believe, and I never saw a bride with such a white set face, never looking at her husband, nor yet at us.

"They was away nearly three months; they came back to the old house. But folks said they wasn't happy, that she was as cold as a stone, and he was always at his books and old insects. One day I got a letter askin' me to come and see her. She was lyin' down on a lounge when I got there, white and so thin, with big eyes, with a sorry, hungry look in 'em. But she had on a smart dress, and was as pretty as a pictur'.

"As soon as we'd shaken hands and I'd taken off my bonnet and shawl, she says:

"'Do you know what day to-morrow is?'

"Then I thought it up, and said it was the 5th of September. 'The day I am to die,' she says in a soft, quiet way. Then I up and asked her if Mortimer had been ill-treatin' her, but she put her finger and said:

"'Not a word to my husband; he doesn't know I know it.'

"Then she said he was awful good to her, but she couldn't get that gravestone out of her head day or night. All at once it came to me how matters was; she'd been too proud to give him up, besides her likin' him, too; and she'd been too proud to tell him about it; and so betwixt the two the poor child was almost beat out. She asked if I would go out to the outhouse with her to see the stone. She wanted to see it, and was afraid to go alone.

"Then a queer thing happened. Mortimer had come into the next room while she'd been talkin', and heard every word. I never saw anybody so stirred up as he was when he came in.

"'Is that tombstone what has stood between us?' he said, and went on to explain that it had been ordered for his mother. He was such a bad writer that the stone-cutter mistook the name Marie for Mary, and after the stone was half done it was found out, and they made him pay for it. So, as it was his, they brought it to him, and, not knowin' what to do with it, he'd just set it up in the outhouse and forgot all about it. Mary, she began to cry, and then they fell to huggin' and kissin' each other, as if they hadn't met for years. I tried to put in a word to ca'm 'em, but they saw me without seeing me, and heard me without hearing me, so I put on my bonnet and shawl and came away and left 'em.

"After that? Dear me, they was the happiest couple you ever saw. They used the gravestone for a front doorstep, wrong side up, and it was really pretty. Mary was dretful proud of him, and believed every word he wrote about them flies and beetles, just as his mother did, which only goes to show that the old sayin' is true, that love is blind." CLARICE IRENE CLINGHAM

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A CASE THAT MADE A NAME.

"What was the most interesting case in your long experience, doctor?"

It was a little entertainment given in honour of Dr. Tournequet's retirement from practice—an event we young aspirants felt inclined to celebrate with no small satisfaction—that the foregoing question was put to the guest of the evening.

"I think," said the old gentleman, after a moment's reflection, and casting a fatherly look upon us through his gold-rimmed spectacles, "about the most interesting case I ever had was my first."

"Would you mind relating it?"

"Not at all. Whatever secret there once was about it, all reason for keeping it has long since ceased.

"It is now nearly fifty years," he continued, "since I presumed to settle down here and enter into competition with Old Carver, whose dazzling gilt sign, emblazoned with his name and professional designation of 'Physician and Chirurgeon'—Curmudgeon would have hit the mark more nearly—had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly of 'lighting fools the way to dusky death.'

"He never passed me without a scowl, and never spoke to me but with contempt. His evident purpose was to nip my pretensions in the bud. I should never have a case if he could help it.

"I came very near having one, in spite of him, before long. A poor wretch had cut his throat, just missing the carotid artery, and severing a number of important veins.

"A messenger dispatched for Old Carver not finding him in, had left word for him to come immediately, and then, as a makeshift, hurried on for me. I accompanied him at once, and found the wounded man so utterly prostrate from the loss of blood that but the faintest signs of life remained. A few drops of an invigorating cordial, which I forced him to swallow, partially revived him; and I was preparing to sew up and dress the wound when Old Carver came bustling in and pushed me aside rudely. Of course, the case was his by right of being first summoned, and I could not oppose his taking charge of it.

"'Humph,' he grunted, clapping his fingers on the patient's pulse, which had somewhat risen from the effect of the cordial, 'what have you been doing here?'

"'I gave him a restorative,' I answered.

"'And threw him into a fever,' interrupted Old Carver, without waiting to hear further.

"Then whipping out his lancet, he proceeded to deplete the sufferer of what little blood he had remaining.

"'I trust you are satisfied with your work,' he growled as the man gave a gasp and sank back dead.

"I was about to repel indignantly the insinuation that it was at my door the man's death lay; but the looks and mutterings of the crowd admonished me that my word would weigh but little against that of the venerable quack, and that if I would get off with a whole skin, I had better go at once.

"I lost no opportunity, whenever I could get a hearing, of relating the true state of the case and vindicating my conduct. The restorative, I insisted, had been absolutely necessary to stimulate the flagging vital current, and demonstrated the stupid folly of bleeding a man almost at death's door. But the listeners would only shake their heads and say: 'Doctor Carver was a very good judge of physic, and they thought I couldn't do better'n larn a wrinkle or two from him.'

"My prospects, which had never risen much above zero, now sank considerably lower. I began to lose heart at last, and was seriously considering the advisableness of giving up the struggle, and leaving the headstrong population to Old Carver and their fate, when one night I received a hurried call to attend a gentleman who had just had his leg broken.

"Mr. Soammi Furneval, the individual referred to, was a respectable middle-aged bachelor, for some time back thought to be particularly attentive to Miss Bernice Potts, a maiden lady of fortune, and nearly his own age.

"In attempting to board a moving train he had missed his footing, and fallen so that one of his legs was run over and completely crushed, almost to the knee.

"They carried him home on a stretcher, and, as usual in such cases, messengers ran for all the doctors in the

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place—that is to say, in the present instance, for Old Carver and myself.

"We arrived simultaneously.

"'It's a compound comminuted fracture of the tibia and the fibula,' said Old Carver, pushing forward to take possession by first getting his ugly paw on the injured limb, which he fumbled roughly through the clothing. 'It's a case for immediate amputation,' he added, opening his case of instruments.

"'I shall not require your services,' spoke up Mr. Furneval, with considerable energy for one in his condition; 'I prefer placing myself in the hands of Dr. Tournequet.'

"Everybody looked astonished, and Old Carver's face grew blacker than a thundercloud.

"'Your blood be on your own head!' he croaked ominously, and, bundling up his instruments, he banged the door behind him.

"'I wish to be left alone with the doctor,' said Mr. Furneval, when Old Carver had gone; 'if assistance be needed it can be called.'

"Everybody withdrew but the patient and myself; and there, alone and single-handed, I did everything the case required."

"You don't mean to say you amputated the limb without assistance?" said a fidgety little M.D. across the table.

"No; you see Mr. F., as I have said, was keeping company with Miss Potts, and thinking he might be better able to walk than to hobble into her affections, we decided against amputation, and proceeded accordingly.

"Next morning I met Old Carver in the street. He was in the habit of passing me with a frown without speaking, but this time he stopped.

"'How's your patient?' he inquired with a sneer.

"'Doing finely,' I replied.

"'Your first amputation, I suppose?'

"'Neither first or last,' I said. 'I didn't amputate at all.'

"'I suppose you know the leg's smashed to flinders?'

"'I do.'

"'And you haven't amputated?'

"'No.'

"'And don't intend to?'

"'No.'

"'Better go by the undertaker's and order a coffin, then!'

"'He's busy on one of your last victims, I believe,' said I, hurrying along without further parley.

"For nearly a week my patient saw no one but myself and the servant who carried up his meals.

"Then a few friends were admitted to cheer his confinement, which he bore with admirable patience. In six weeks I removed the splints, and the next day Mr. Furneval was walking out as well as ever. My fame was in everybody's mouth. Even Old Carver could find nothing to carp at, for he had everywhere circulated the terrible nature of the injury, and predicted the patient's speedy death. My practice soon exceeded my most sanguine hopes, and Old Carver's whilom patrons flocked to me in such numbers that he shut up shop and retired in disgust."

"Was the limb really as badly fractured as at first supposed?" inquired the fidgety little doctor opposite.

"Quite—ground almost to powder, you might say."

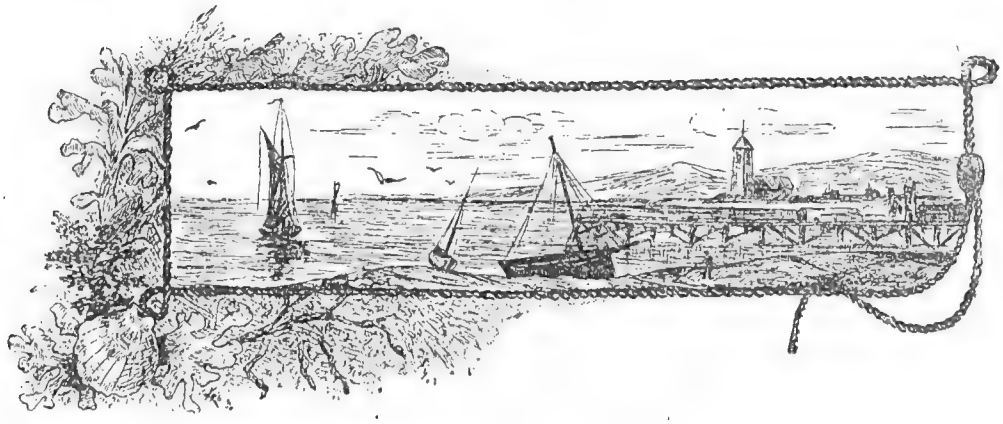
"And gave no signs of lameness afterwards?"

"No more than before; there had previously been a slight hitch in that leg, but I think there was less afterwards."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the little doctor.

"Not at all. You see, and there lay the secret, the injured leg was of wood, and we replaced it with a better one."

U. P



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BELOW you will find ten pictures. Each represents the name of a Peer of the Realm. The title alone is indicated, not the family name.

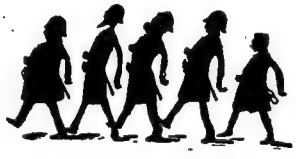
Write down their names in the spaces provided, and keep your lists until you are told to send them in.

Don't be discouraged if you cannot solve them all. Others may be no more clever than yourself. Send in fifty-five, or fifty, or even fewer.

You may forward as many attempts as you like, but each set of six must be in a separate envelope, and will be considered separate attempts.

No. 11.....

No. 12.....



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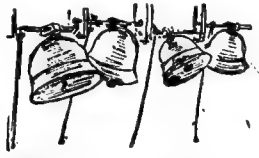


No. 16.....

No. 17.....

No. 18.....

Remember these Things.

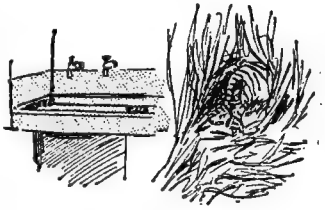
YOUNG PEOPLE should compete and get their elders to help them.

If there is any picture you cannot name some friend may be able to give you the information.

You need only give the titles of the people. The family names are not depicted.

Name.....

Address.....



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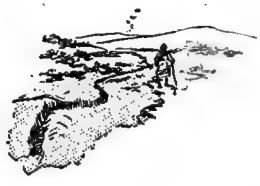

No. 20.....

There are plenty of sources from which you can obtain a list of the names of Peers.—Whitaker's Almanack, and publications of that sort. They will help you to win.

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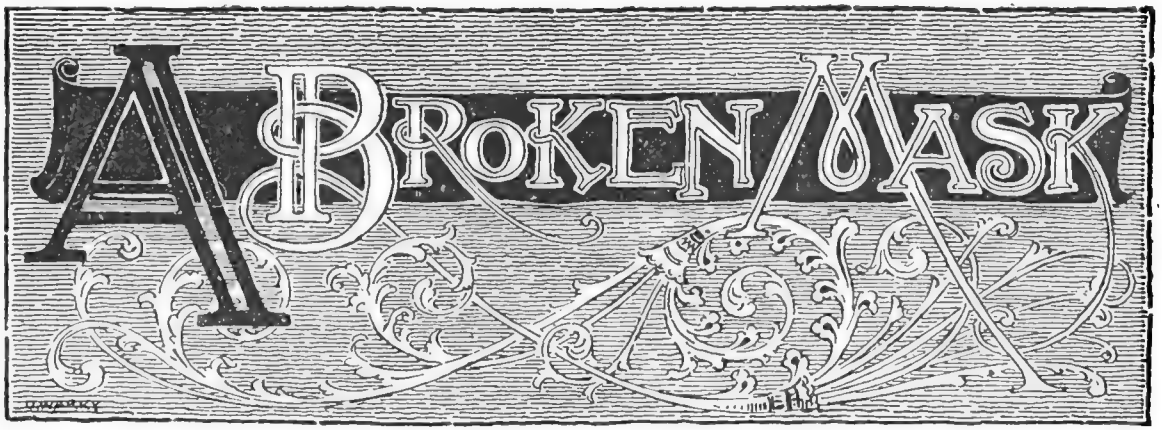

BY JOAN BARRETT.

SUMMARY.

The story opens with an introduction to the inmates of two farmhouses in an English village named Thorneydene. Honeypots Farm has recently been taken by a young stranger, John Gillway, about whom there seems to be a mystery.

His neighbour, Farmer Strange, is a widower with twin daughters, Diana and Kitty, who have been brought up for the most part by a wealthy aunt, Mrs. Caffyn, who is about to take them on the Continent.

Gillway has already fallen in love with Kitty, who was at first pleased by his attentions. She soon wearied of them, but being half afraid of him, makes many promises of fidelity before going abroad with her sister and aunt, which she never intends to keep.

At Capri they meet with Bernard Eliot, nicknamed "the Nabob" on account of his wealth. He speedily wins the affections of all three ladies, but seems to prefer Di's society.

At the end of three months they return to London, and as the two girls have now attained their majority they are given the option of remaining with their aunt or returning to their father for good. Kitty chooses the former and Di the latter.

CHAPTER V.

The Gathering of a Cloud.

"Well, there," said Aunt Shales in her sweetest tone of voice. "As I says, an' shall keep on a-sayin' to my dyin' day even if I lives to be a hundred—not as *that's* likely, seein' as I've gone through more trouble an' had more to put up with than anybody'll ever know in this blessed world—*you*, knows what trouble is, Jane, an' I should like to meet with the woman as don't know what it is—that I should—as I was a-sayin' when our Poll sat in the very chair you're settin' in—I'd put on a clean chintzy cover that very day—oh, I can't abide dirt, I can't—an' up and told me as you should call her a born liar, I never did feel so took to. As I says, 'tain't like Jane to go a-callin' her relatives names. Oh, I knows what *you* be, Jane. Course, I didn't make any remark to Poll. She makes enough worrits in the fam'ly, don't she now? But I did say jest to myself like, as 'twas too bad of Poll, seein' how good you'd bin to her."

Miss Jane Shales gave a little snort of righteous indignation and carefully spread out the shining folds of her best black visiting alpaca. She was a thin, highly respectable, if a soured looking woman of five-and-fifty, with well-oiled grey hair, a fine set of white teeth, and a very high colour, that increased at Aunt Shales' words.

"I nursed Poll's children through the whooping cough an' the measles," said she austerely, "an' I am sorry for it. Their mother is the most ungrateful critter."

"So she be, Jane. Oh, she didn't say nothin' to me about *that*, though I did hear as she told Bob's Mary that you mussed up all the med'cines, and gave po'r little Jenny three or four doses of linseed oil an' vinegar what Poll had mixed ready for polishin' the furniture——"

Miss Shales sprang from her seat with an angry exclamation. "*I* do such a thing!" she cried. "Poll must be mad to think it! If ever anybody looked well after children an' saw as they had ther doses right to the very minute by the clock hands, I did.

"Poll's out of her mind to say such a thing about *me*. I on'y wish she'd come in at that door this moment. I'd make her own up to the truth. Linseed oil an' vinegar, indeed; ugh!"

"Oh, she admitted as you didn't go to do it intentional," said Aunt Shales soothingly. "Though, as she said, it might have pisoned the child, an' made her feel a bit anxious, seein' as there was rat pison an' chilblain mixture all on the same shelf. But as our Bob's Mary said to her, 'twas all her fault, considerin' as you can't read an' don't know nothin' about letters and——"

"I mayn't have been born in these days of board schools and sich like," retorted Miss Shales, growing a fine deep purple, "but I've got my share of common-sense, an' I know rat pison an' chilblain stuff from good wholesome physic, no matter how nasty it may taste. I'm not quite a fool, Ann."

"Lawks, you ain't got no need to tell me that," cried Aunt Shales. "Sit you down agin, now do, Jane. The cuttin's 'ull be done to a turn in a minute. You likes 'em brown, don't you? Pork wants to be well fried, or else you may as well put my ole boots on the tea-table for toughness. I tole that Em'ly to bring us in a plate of buttered toast; but I really do believe as that gal's headpiece is as full of holes for lettin' things slip out as a cullender."

Miss Shales gave another snort and looked at the polished range where Aunt Shales was cooking the meat for tea. The sound of the meat hissing and spluttering in the bright pan, the appetising odour that issued from it, and the cheerfully arranged tea-table with its snowy cloth, and shining brown loaf, and yellow pat of butter, induced her to take her hostess's advice. She resumed her seat, and slowly drew off a pair of well-worn black silk gloves.

"Poll's got a bad heart," she observed. "An' she've got on'y herself *an'* her tongue to blame for losin' me for a friend. I did think of givin' little Lottie them pink corals of mine; but I shan't do no sich thing now!"

"Oh, I said as you wouldn't!" declared Aunt Shales as she dexterously turned the pork cuttings from the pan to a hot white and blue dish, drawing back to avoid the spluttering bubbles of boiling fat. "As I up an' said to her; how could she expect as you would after all as she'd said? Oh, I can't abide them folks as is allays a-sayin' as they didn't say this, an' they didn't say the other. Now, Poll's she's one of that sort, she is. What was it she told me about your offerin' to knock her down, Jane? Don't upset your tea. It's jest by your elbow," as her visitor started in surprise.

"Me offer to knock our Poll down?" repeated Miss

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Shales, brandishing her gloves in the air as though they were war-clubs. "Well—I never did!"

"I thought it odd at the time," remarked Aunt Shales, tenderly loading her guest's plate with fried meat. "Take some mustard, Jane, an' eat it up while it's nice and hot. Ah, here's Em'ly with the toast, an' dried up to a cinder, I'll be bound. I never did know your double for doin' things as contrairy as one cross road is to the other. There, don't stand gapin' at me, don't. Put the plate down, an' get on with that bed-tick. You can sit in the gun-room, an' then there'll be no fear of the fire a-goin' out before Mr. John gets back. Is your tea to your likin', Jane?" she asked in tones of deepest solicitude. "Do you take rum in it? A drop from time to time is good for the wind, ain't it? I generally keeps the bottle locked up, for you can't trust that Em'ly not a bit further than you can see her. You got to keep your eyes a-purlin' all the time to be up to 'em, an' then they've got ways of doin' you!"

"I should like to know what our Poll meant by sayin' sich a wicked falsehood," interrupted Miss Shales excitedly. "Me offer to knock her down! Me as can't live as quiet an' peaceable as I should like, an' ain't never raised my hand, except in kindness, against any livin' critter, me——"

"There, I wouldn't upset myself, if I was you," said Aunt Shales, producing the rum-bottle, and eyeing its contents with a suspicious look in her round, rosy face. "You'll on'y make yourself ill, po'r dear. I wouldn't think no more about it. Help yourself, do, Jane." She watched Miss Shales pour the rum into her tea-cup with a shaking hand, and as she possessed herself again of the bottle, she added with a gloomy shake of her head: "Ah, 'twould be a good thing for our fam'ly if Poll *could* take jest a little less of *this*."

She tapped the bottle with her short, thick fingers.

"I seed how things was goin' when she was takin' tea here in this very room with me before Christmas. She takes too much, between you an' me, Jane. 'Course, *I* didn't say nothin'. You knows what I am for keepin' things to myself like. You're different, bein' po'r Shales' own sister, an' like my own sister, as I may say. I measured the rum in the bottle, afore I gave it to her, with my very eyes, an' I should like you to have seed it after she'd helped herself. I never did like her a-dealin' at them stores where they sells all kinds of bottled stuffs and encourages people in deceitfulness. How's anybody to know what everybody else buys when it all comes home in the grocery basket, and you can't even tell a bottle of vinegar from a bottle of spirits, so artful as they are in wrappin' of 'em up alike. Them stores will be the ruin of Poll. Lawks, Jane, do eat a bit. Feel bad, don't you? ah, I knows what it is to be slandered an' backbit up hill an' down dale, as you may say; but lawks, I ain't dead yet, an' 'twon't kill you neither. Well, here's luck!" she added, raising her tea-cup.

"What should I want to knock our Poll down for, that's what gets over me," said Miss Shales plaintively. "The mussin' up of medicines ain't nothin' to bein' accused of wantin' to fight."

"Oh, I knows what it was for, cause she tole me her own self. 'Twas about that pig affair—she called on you, an' you called her a liar for a-sayin' as you hadn't paid Farmer Strange for your pig, an' you offered to knock her down. So *she* says; but lawks, Jane, I wouldn't demean myself by lettin' sich things worrit me. People as takes a drop too much don't know what they says half their times, that they don't."

"It's very hard on them as have got to suffer by it. I couldn't find my receipt from Farmer Strange for the pig, so I went up yesterday an' asked him to give me another. I've been huntin' and huntin' for that paper for the past three or four months, an' I can't find it nowheres. But I've got one now, an' I mean to go to our Poll and show it to her to-morrow. I shall go after tea, now, an' jest give her a bit of my mind, the spiteful varmint!" declared Miss Shales, growing more embittered against her niece as she thought of her sister-in-law's confidences.

"Help yourself, do, Jane."

"That I would," said Aunt Shales heartily. "An' jest tell her at the same time as I tole you as she should up an' say as she never said nothin' about the pig. I said I'd tell you, an' I have." She looked at her visitor's almost untouched plate, and bending forward, she touched the spinster's thin arm with coaxing persuasion. "Lawks, Jane, you'll never make ole bones and grin through life if you don't eat enough to keep a flea alive an' kickin'. As I says, let's be happy while we can, seein' as the longest-lived ain't here for ever, an' old as Methusaley was he had to go like the rest of us. So you've been to Greyhouse, have you? Miss Di looks a bit peckish, don't she? She didn't have over much colour when I seed her go by t'other day; but she's a nice gal, oh, she is, an' not a bit uppish like Miss Kitty, who wouldn't so much as pass the time o' day with you. I heard as Miss Kitty ain't comin' here no more. Hard on her po'r father, ain't it?"

"I heard as your master was sweet on her like the rest of the young men about here," said Miss Shales, evidently determined to forget her troubles and interest herself in the inmates of Greyhouse Farm.

"Ah, I've heard the same thing, too, an' I shouldn't be surprised if it was true; for a more melancholy man I've never met in a day's march. He ought to have been a mute at a funeral, that he did. An' never tells me a word about

hisself—oh, not a whisper about nothin', an' thinks no more of goin' away for a week at a stretch, an' never lettin' me know where's to, nor when he's a-comin' home, but just walks in like a ghost at all times of the night and day, an' expects to find everythink ready an' to be made jest as comfortable as if he was a Christian. Oh, he's a tryin' customer is Mr. John." She lowered her voice and asked mysteriously:

"Did our Poll tell you about the fight he had with some man what came to see him just afore Christmas? They had a set to with whips. Ah, there's more than we know a-goin' on in this world, Jane. Some people's got secrets what 'ud bring 'em to the gallows, if everythink was laid as open as my hand!"

She drew her chair nearer to Miss Shales. The two grey heads bent over the tea-tray, and Em'ly, listening at the keyhole, failed to catch the whispered conversation that followed.

Di had returned to Thorneydene with the fixed resolve to forget the Nabob, and to live only for her father. Mrs. Caffyn had raised a few feeble objections against Di's carrying out her resolve; but they had been spoken in such a half-hearted manner that Di had not experienced any difficulty in having her own way. Kitty had cried a little and protested a great deal. She had never been separated from Di, and even to one with her light disposition and fickle character, it was a wrench, this entire separation of their lives.

"I think you ought to know, Di," said Mrs. Caffyn, "that in leaving me you leave the little fortune behind for Kitty, that I always intended to divide between you upon your marriage. Instead of having only fifteen thousand pounds, Kitty will now have thirty."

"I am very glad that Kitty will be so rich," Di answered. "I am grateful for all your kindness to me, auntie. You have always been so good to me, dear, and I am sorry to go away; but I have always thought that it would be cruel to leave dad all alone in his old age."

"Do you intend to become an old maid?" asked Mrs. Caffyn with a laugh. "You are a silly girl, Di. Some day you will be sure to leave your father. You do not belong to that class of women who find happiness in leading lonely, secluded lives. One day, sooner or later, you will repent this quixotic action."

Di was thinking of this conversation as she trudged through the fields two or three days after her return to Thorneydene. The May day was fair and mild, and the buds of the trees were swelling, ready to burst into tender green at the first few days of warm rain.

"I won't repent it," said Di to herself. "Dad is happy at having me, and surely one must find happiness in giving pleasure to others."

But as Aunt Shales had stated, Di was pale, and just a little sad and weary looking. It was not quite so easy to forget as she had imagined. Those kisses of the Nabob seemed to have shadowed her life. She flushed as she thought of them.

"He had no right to kiss me if—if he did not love me," she murmured angrily. "A *good* man, a really good man, would not have done that! He must have seen that I cared for him—perhaps he pitied me—oh, it is humiliating to think of!"

She paused at a stile leading into a meadow. A yellow bank of pale primroses met her eyes, and a faint smile of pleasure parted her lips as she saw the flowers. With so many beautiful objects around her, surely she must find an interest in this new life that she had chosen of her own unbiassed will. When one did one's best to forget, it would, indeed, be strange if forgetfulness did not come. Di climbed the stile, and gathered a large bunch of blossoms.

As she stood near the stile arranging them, John Gillway came striding towards her from his own fields. He looked much older, and the bitter moroseness of his expression had deepened. The deeply engraved lines around his stern mouth looked as though they had been cut into the flesh with a chisel. There was something so stern, and with the sternness such deep unhappiness—such keen anxiety—in his

Di climbed the style.

dark, melancholy face that Di felt a vague, uncomfortable sensation torment her, such as one experiences when reading sorrow and suffering in the eyes of animals, and with pity for their pain and the dumbness that locks their tongues, comes that miserable feeling of impotence to help them or to make them understand that one sympathises with them, and would do anything to help and console them.

He came straight towards her, walking with the air of a man who had an object in view.

"Miss Strange," he said abruptly when he had joined her, and with no other preface than the simple lifting of his cloth cap, "why hasn't your sister returned with you?"

He spoke in a commanding, brusque tone, as though he felt that he had a right to ask the question, and to demand an answer to it. Di started in surprise, and the colour grew in her thin cheeks. But she answered him without hesitation. "She has chosen to remain with our aunt, Mrs. Caffyn."

"But she will return to Thorneydene later on?"

"No; unless it is to visit dad and myself."

Gillway drew in a long, deep breath, and his hand sought his collar. Di remembered the day at Capri when her neck-ribbon had seemed to be too tight, and seeing the man's involuntary action she understood and was sorry for him.

"Not coming back!" he repeated. "Are you sure?"

"Quite sure."

"But she is not yet her own mistress," said Gillway, betraying how deeply he had been taken into Kitty's confidence.

"She was twenty-one a few days ago—upon the twenty-ninth of April."

Gillway bent and looked searchingly into Di's face. The sweet honesty of her lips and eyes did not escape him. But Kitty also had seemed so loyal, and Kitty had deceived him with a cruel deliberation that was wantonness itself.

"Then am I to understand that your sister has chosen to live entirely with Mrs. Caffyn?" he asked quietly, but with a sudden clenching of one strong, brown hand upon the stick he carried.

"Yes."

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"Heavens!" muttered Gillway. "What a blind fool I have been!" he turned his head away and stared with unseeing eyes at the green meadow, the young foliage of the

He pulled his moustache and stared.

trees, and a flock of chattering jackdaws perched in the elms close by. The birds seemed to be mocking him. There was a worldly-wise, sarcastic sound in their muttered confidences to each other, as though they understood that Kitty had lied to him, and mocked his anguish. He looked at Di, and saw the deep pity—the shame—that lay in her eyes, and he laughed savagely.

"I suppose you know the pretty little story," he cried harshly. "Kitty has told you how completely she has succeeded in duping me! Have you ever laughed together at the thought of how I was patiently waiting for her, hungering for a letter that never came, working honestly to make a comfortable home for her—a home that we were to share together—it must have amused you to think of all this! Fools were made to tickle people who've a sense of the ludicrous."

"We never laughed at you. I knew nothing about this," said Di very softly, because of the agony in the man's wild face. "And I am sorry—indeed I am."

The wolfish expression in Gillway's eyes thrilled Di with fear for Kitty. She felt that his love had turned to hatred, and that this hatred was a thing to dread.

"It's not the loss of her love so much," said Gillway. "It's the feeling that I've been worshipping a little paltry soul, and mistook it for my ideal of all that is good and noble in a woman. It hurts to find that one's golden treasure is only gilded tin—and gilded tin of the commonest and cheapest kind. It lowers one's self-respect. You can never feel quite sure about your judgment after such an experience. Is Kitty still in London?" he asked, turning his blood-shot eyes upon Di's pale face.

She hesitated, but her regard did not shrink beneath his stern scrutiny. He saw her reluctance to answer, and laughed bitterly. "Don't feel afraid of telling me, Miss Strange. It is not Kitty who will be harmed by me. At first I felt that it would be pleasant to yield to my savage instinct of revenge; to track her down and do something to her pretty face that would effectually prevent any other man from following in my footsteps. Very brutal, isn't it?"

Di shuddered. What a cruel face Gillway had! How bitter the thoughts must have been that had cut those deep furrows in his cheeks!

"Yes," she answered, "it would be mean and degrading to yield to such feelings. Kitty has wronged you. That is no reason why you should injure her; and if you think her—her—so contemptible, it would be lowering yourself to her standard to try to injure her. I can't express myself very clearly, but I am sure that I am right. It must be more noble to bear pain in silence than to seek revenge upon the person who has hurt you."

"Your theory's all right," said Gillway, "but a man finds more satisfaction in giving his enemy a good kick than he would ever get out of simply offering his hand, and whining that he was going to be noble and forgive, and all the rest of it. If anyone has struck me, I have always struck back—harder, if I could. It's the first time that I've been floored by a woman, and it makes me despise myself."

"It is your own fault," cried Di, with a flash in her eyes. "How could you expect Kitty to honour you when you taught her to meet her clandestinely, unknown to dad and to me?"

Gillway opened his lips to cry some harsh invective against Kitty, but the light in Di's eyes checked the words. He pulled his moustache and stared.

"If you loved her you should have gone straight to dad and told him. Nothing good ever comes from deceit. You say and think bad things about Kitty because she has flirted with you and forgotten you. She is only a girl. You are a man, and older than she, and you should have known better."

"Look here, Miss Strange," said Gillway, passing one hand over his haggard face. "I wasn't going to clear myself; it's a mean trick to throw all the blame upon the woman, and a dirty one, too. But Kitty's conduct is not more free from blame than mine. I wanted her to let me speak to her father. She wouldn't. She was afraid, she said——"

"Kitty's conduct doesn't clear yours," Di retorted with a proud movement of her head. "You are old enough to know right from wrong, and if you deliberately commit a wrong action, you've no right to cry out when you suffer the consequences."

A few drops of rain fell as she spoke. She gathered her skirts around her and bade Gillway a curt good-afternoon. Her heart had quaked with fear; but she exulted as she hurried back home. She had not given him Kitty's address, and to-morrow Kitty and Mrs. Caffyn would be in Yorkshire. They had accepted an invitation to spend a week with the Malets. Gillway looked after the tall, erect figure with an unfriendly light in his gloomy eyes.

"I'll see her again," he muttered, "and if she tells me that Kitty has accepted any other man"—he paused, and added, with a hiss of the words between his teeth—"that man shall pay dearly for robbing me of—my little gilded tin god!"

Di seemed to grow paler in the days that followed, though she won old Betty's praises by her unflagging zeal and industry, and seemed so happy that her father never dreamt of the sleepless nights she passed fighting with her fears for Kitty's safety and her own sorrow. She, too, had loved only to meet with pain and disappointment; but it had not been the Nabob's fault—Di felt sure of that. Only he ought not to have kissed her. Things would have been so much easier to bear had it not been for the recollection of those farewell kisses. She tried to forget them, and was angry because she could not.

Then, as she grew thoroughly interested in her simple duties, her reward came. The image of the Nabob grew fainter and fainter in her memory. The colour returned to her cheeks; she sang as she went about the house. After some time she was able to look back and laugh at her foolishness in believing that she had given her heart to a man who did not desire it.

Kitty's letters were so full of happiness that Di decided to cast no shadow upon her sister's high spirits by mentioning her interview in the fields with Gillway. Di knew that Kitty would be alarmed. Once, in one of those brightly-written letters from Yorkshire, Kitty had asked if Di had encountered the mysterious tenant of Honeypots

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Farm. It was the only reference that she had ever made to him, and Di had passed it by in silence.

Once or twice a week Gillway came to Greyhouse to talk over farming affairs with Farmer Strange, the prices of corn and hay, and the unsatisfactory or satisfactory working of new machinery that the younger man had bought. Di generally contrived to absent herself upon those occasions. When she could not avoid being present she knew that Gillway had a habit of pulling his moustache and looking at her. She manœuvred to give him no opportunity of having a private conversation with her, fearing that he would speak of Kitty.

Farmer Strange did not care for Gillway. The young man's ideas were too modern for him to assimilate. He was so utterly unlike any other man known to the rough farmers, with his interesting descriptions of foreign countries that he had visited and the customs of their inhabitants, that it often seemed to Strange that the young man was a gentleman playing at being a hard-working man, just as Di appeared to him to be a lady masquerading as a dairymaid in her simple cotton dress, and with her shapely white hands that looked too dainty and delicate for the work she imposed upon them.

"I don't want you to do work that a lady wouldn't do," said he for the hundredth time to Di since her return to the farm. "Butter and cheese making ain't in your style, my girl."

"Oh, daddy, how nasty of you to say that!" cried Di, casting a reproachful glance at his thin furrowed face. "Just when Betty has been telling me that I am getting on so well, too."

They were standing in the garden where the flowers were beginning to open to the June sunshine. Di had stripped up the sleeves of her print gown high above her dimpled elbows.

Her father was looking at her pretty, fair arms in disapproval, with a wrinkle between his bushy grey eyebrows.

"It doesn't seem right somehow, Di," said he, rubbing his hollow cheeks in perplexity. "You've been brought up to be a lady, and——"

"I can be a dairymaid and a lady at the same time," said Di, lifting her little dark head proudly. "If I went to a ball I should have my sleeves ever so much shorter—more in this style, dear."

"I can be a dairymaid and a lady at the same time."

With a rapid gesture she rolled her sleeves still higher, and then, turning to her father with a smile, she linked her arm in his, and softly rubbed her cheek against his arm.

"Oh, daddy," she said in a low voice; "you don't know how happy I am to be at home——" she broke off in surprise. A hired fly had stopped at the garden gate, and a gentleman was aiding a little lady in a fawn dress to alight. Di stared at the lady for a second, and then began to pull her father towards the gate.

"It is, Kitty!" she cried. "Kitty and"—she paused, the colour rushed into her cheeks—"and the Nabob!"

Farmer Strange knitted his shaggy eyebrows, and his face assumed its most severe expression. He had never heard of the Nabob. The name was Greek to him. He saw a young, handsome man, with a golden-brown moustache, and particularly smiling, happy eyes that met his own very frankly as he advanced leading Kitty. She was rosy, embarrassed, and more pretty than ever in her light, lace-trimmed gown and large white hat with its soft white plumes.

"Oh, dad! Oh, Di!" she began, and threw herself into Di's arms. "We were married this morning, and, oh, I do hope that John Gillway won't do anything foolish!" she whispered in her sister's ear, while the Nabob was shaking hands and explaining matters to Farmer Strange.

"I feel ashamed of robbing you of Kitty in this underhanded fashion," said he, holding the farmer's rough brown hand and looking him frankly in the eyes. "I wanted to ask you to the wedding, but Kitty was so dreadfully afraid of some ruffian of a farmer coming up to London and making a jealous scene, that I listened to her entreaties to keep our engagement a secret from you. But I made up my mind to see you as soon as the ceremony was over. I felt that I must apologise and make things square, you know. 'Pon my word, I feel quite uncomfortable about it. Didn't seem like treating you with proper respect, sir."

Farmer Strange looked hard at the Nabob, and then at Kitty, whose eyes drooped beneath his regard.

"Kitty is her own mistress," said he; "I hope she's chosen well." He shuffled his feet uneasily, and hid a nervous cough behind one big palm, intimidated by this fine gentleman, with his well-gloved hands and diamond breast-pin.

John Gillway fell into utter insignificance compared with the Nabob.

"When were you married?" he asked awkwardly.

"I've just told Di that we were married this morning," cried Kitty. She kissed her father heartily. "Why, you haven't spoken to Di! She looks dumb with surprise," she added, giving her husband a little playful push.

Di tried to command her voice, as she laid her hand in the Nabob's. There was simple brotherly affection in his eyes.

"I am surprised," she admitted. "I—I—hope you will be happy."

"Thank you, Di," the Nabob said heartily, as he wrung

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A gentleman was aiding a little lady . . . to alight.

her hand; "I knew we should have your good wishes. What a jolly old place! Can you put us up for a week or two?" he asked Farmer Strange. "I should be so glad if you would. I don't want you to think that I'm going to deprive you of my little wife. If it would be agreeable to you, we should like to spend our honeymoon in Kitty's old home."

Farmer Strange looked steadily at his son-in-law, measured him from head to foot, coughed and rubbed his ill-shaven chin. That Kitty had married a gentleman did not astonish him. Had she married a Prince of the royal blood it would not have seemed odd to him. But that this fine gentleman should be anxious to make the acquaintance of Kitty's father, and should propose staying beneath the humble farm-roof did amaze Farmer Strange. He admired his son-in-law for his lack of pride, but he did not feel comfortable as visions arose before him of the necessity of removing his hob-nailed boots before venturing into the "parlours," where naturally Kitty and her husband would live. The Windsor arm-chair in the kitchen was more to his taste than the finer chairs in the "parlours." And from the kitchen window he could see the men passing by in the big yard, while the windows of the other rooms looked into the garden.

"We are not going to change your daily routine," said the Nabob reading the hesitation and doubt in the farmer's face. "If you have bread and cheese for dinner, we shall eat the same fare, and enjoy it, too, I'll be bound!"

"Bread and cheese! How foolish you are, Bernie!" cried Kitty, hanging upon her husband's arm, and smiling into his sunny face. "Whatever made you think that they ate bread and cheese at home?"

"Well, I hoped they did," answered the Nabob. "I like bread and cheese, with one of those big, sweet, juicy lettuces, fresh from the garden, don't you know. One gets so jolly tired of dinners of ten courses! What do you call those big lettuces—Roman's or Coss?"

"We calls 'em Coss lettuces," replied Farmer Strange, giving another perplexed glance at his son-in-law. "In summer time," he added, "we lives in the kitchen. There's three parlours in the house, but I never did take kindly to a parlour. Don't feel at home in one. Still, I've no doubt you do, and Kitty. I know *she* does, so if you like to use 'em——"

"Of course we shall!" Kitty interrupted. Her face had grown scarlet, and her imploring eyes said to Di: "Oh, do stop him, do, *please* stop him!"

She threw a furtive look at her husband, afraid of seeing shame and amusement in his expression. She felt so very ashamed of her poor old father with his blunders, and his want of tact, and his shabby, ill-fitting clothes. She had tried playfully to depict him to her husband when she had discovered how utterly impossible were all her efforts to dissuade him from visiting Greyhouse Farm, and she was immensely relieved to see that he was watching her father with kindly sympathy and good humour.

"We shan't put you to any inconvenience, Di?" asked the Nabob. "I'm afraid I must seem pretty cool to marry Kitty in this sly way, and then to spring a surprise upon you, and to come begging for a fortnight's hospitality. But if we shall put you out——" he paused, and smiled affectionately at Di. She was a little pale, but she had entirely recovered her self-possession.

"Do pull your sleeves down! You look like a housemaid!" whispered Kitty.

Di pulled mechanically at her sleeves. A look of relief came into her father's face. He had never thought it possible that anyone could feel ashamed of himself; but he had felt ashamed of Di being caught by Kitty and her husband in a common cotton gown and with naked arms.

"Put us out!" he cried in his content at seeing Di's pretty arms hidden respectably from sight. "Not a bit of it! Come 'long in! We'll drink a bottle of good wine to your very good healths, an' many of 'em."

Kitty and her husband entered the house, and Di, feeling like a person walking in her sleep, went into the kitchen to consult old Betty about providing accommodation for their guests. She thought of Mrs. Caffyn, and with her wonderment pity mingled itself.

(To be continued.)

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Price, post paid per return, carefully packed, 2s. 3d. Send at once, as our number is limited and we cannot prepare more at the price.

£100 Cash. £100. Prizes £100.

First Prize, £20; 2nd, £10; 3rd, £8; 4th, £6; 5th, £4; 6th, £2; also ten prizes of £5 each will be given to the owners of the FIRST TEN LETTERS OPENED (provided their money is inclosed and their solutions correct).
The prizes will be awarded in order of correctness. Money returned if not satisfied (within three days).

E F G * * * * * * * * * * * * * * D E Y	R A I * * * * * * * * * * * * * * A A Y

DIRECTIONS.—Fill in the stars with letters to form the name of a country which, when all are completed, will represent SIX GREAT EUROPEAN POWERS. Copy out on a sheet of paper as many as you can find out, and post to us with P.O. or stamps for 2s. 3d. and a stamped addressed envelope for your prize, result, etc., to

WEST & WEST, The Royal Photo Co., 10, Featherstone Buildings, London, W.C.

NOTE.—This contest closes on Saturday, June 19th, but there is only a limited number. You should, therefore, send early. You are bound to get a prize if you are correct in the six names. Should more than one prove correct, the money will be divided. Try for one or more of the ten £5 prizes; though you may not be first, your letter may be FIRST OPENED.
The names and addresses of the ten £5 prize winners, together with full particulars of the prizes, results, etc., will be dispatched on Monday, June 21st, 1897.

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If you require a reliable remedy for the relief of superfluous fat, send for a box of my "H.D." Pills. No starvation required; you may eat and drink what you like, yet I guarantee to either sex a permanent reduction of 5lb. to 7lb. weekly. They are a harmless vegetable preparation; successful in the most stubborn cases, and improve health and figure. Their action is rapid, certain, safe, tasteless, and highly recommended. Prices, 2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., and 11s., post free, plain wrapper. PROFESSOR F. T. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

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Answers to Correspondents.

H. G.—Taking Europe as a whole, there are many more people engaged in the pursuit of agriculture than in manufacture. Always inclose a stamped envelope with your letter if you want an immediate reply.

Well-wisher writes to point out with reference to a paragraph that appeared in a recent number of *Short Stories* that not only is it possible to coin silver and bronze at the Mint simultaneously, but, taking the year throughout, there is seldom a time when either gold or silver, or silver and bronze are not being coined at the same moment.

G. B. B.—That your idea is a good one is assured by the fact that we were already busy developing the identical scheme when your letter arrived. Thanks for writing, all the same.

Miss S. T. — Gloves, I should say. Nearly thirty-seven million pairs are used in this country every year, which is about equal to one pair for every person.

H. K.—Winchester College is the oldest public school in this country; it was founded in 1393.

A. N. W.—Very few English churches have a surpliced choir of women choristers.

A Constant Reader. — The Royal Standard is divided into four quarterings, two being assigned to England, one to Scotland, and the other to Ireland. The latter consists of an azure ground, bearing on it a harp or stringed argent.

C. C. H.—Stockings made from human hair are supposed to be the best preventative for wet feet. They are used by fishermen on certain parts of the French coast. I should not like to vouch for their comfort, however.

L. M.—It was unfortunate for you that your attempt was posted without an address. But you may comfort yourself with the knowledge that about 26,000 other letters are posted in England every year without addresses.

Wax.—There is no doubt but that more wooden matches are made in Sweden than in any other country.

R. B. — The largest congregation of ancient people seems to exist at a little village in France, named Aumona. There are only forty inhabitants, twenty-three of whom are eighty years of age, and one is over a hundred. This rather puts your village into the shade, doesn't it?

T. C. D.—There is twenty times the amount of unmined coal in China than there is in all Europe. Your baby is certainly intelligent. It is not the only one to appreciate *Short Stories*.

V. B.—Yes, the effects of frost differ widely. Under its influence, eggs will burst, apples contract, and potatoes turn black.

D. C.—Chinese women are not allowed to act upon the stage.

H. M.—The average length of a man's stride is thirty and a half inches. When he gets a prize in *Short Stories* it is forty-five.

W. B.—A penny changes hands about 125,000 times in the course of its life. The publications issued from this office are directly responsible for over 50,000,000 single pennies changing hands in a year.

B. S.—You will find the cod to be about the most digestible of fish—and also about the most tasteless.

G. F.—Our foot gear is certainly by no means a small item in our yearly expenditure. More than half a million is expended in this country every year on boot blacking.

H. S.—The harp is the Queen's favourite instrument, and I agree with you that it is a pity it is not more popular. Probably this is due to the expense of the instrument, and the difficulty of attaining proficiency. If you think of studying the harp you must be prepared for sore finger-tips, but it is well worth the trouble.

W. W.—There is no rhyme to *virtue*. About 5,000 other words in the English language have no rhyme to them. Glad to hear you like the *Athletic Record*. Persevere in the theatre ticket competition. The seats are quite worth trying for.

H. G. H.—No, butter was not always a recognised article of food. It was used by the ancients as an ointment, in the same way in which we should use cold cream or vaseline, and the idea of eating it never occurred to them.

Jack Tar.—The custom amongst sailors of piercing the ears probably arose from a superstition that wearing earrings is beneficial to weak eyes.

T. H.—The climate of Britain is so very changeable that it would be difficult to say which is the wettest month, for the driest month in one year is quite as likely to be the wettest in the next. On the average, however, the greatest depth of rain falls in October and the least in February.

D. S. C.—No, our voices do not sound the same to us as they do to other people. This has been proved by means of the phonograph.

Suspicious.—There are plenty of ways of testing whether milk is pure or has been watered. Try this one: dip a knitting needle vertically into the fluid, and if after carefully withdrawing it you find a drop remains at the end of the needle the milk is pure. If, on the other hand, there is no drop, you may rest assured the milk has been adulterated.

B. C.—Women are less prone to insanity than men. No, we do not accept verses for *S.S.*

P. O. B.—Hibernia was an ancient name for Ireland.

Rollo.—The difference between "hard" and "soft" water lies in the fact that hard water contains a certain amount of earthy salts, whilst soft water is free from them, and in a greater state of purity generally.

Mannikin.—No, a fog does not impede sound as well as light.

W. S.—It is difficult to say whether animals dream or not. We do not understand their language, and so cannot ascertain by personal inquiry. Judging from the way in which some horses neigh, and dogs bark and growl in their sleep, I should say that they most probably do.

G. L. M.—The birds of the New World certainly possess most brilliant plumage, but their powers of song for the most part are a long way inferior to the less assuming British birds.

G. R.—A really good glass eye is an expensive article. The actual manufacture costs something like £10. But it will last a lifetime—barring accidents.

E. R.—I never give medical advice. You had better consult your doctor on the matter.

Stylites.—St. Bartholomew's is the oldest hospital in London. It was founded in the year 1123. The other matter you mention was referred to in this column a few weeks ago.

C. H.—The House of Commons has met on Sunday several times when urgency has demanded it.

F. A. T.—(1) "The American Emperor" will run in *Pearson's Weekly* until Whitsuntide. (2) Yes, we shall probably publish the other story to which you refer. (3) The other paper was first published in June, 1888; *Pearson's Weekly* in July, 1890.

E. C.—There are already several chainless bicycles on the market. The best known, perhaps, is the "Acatene." Messrs. Spink, of Piccadilly, are reliable numismatists.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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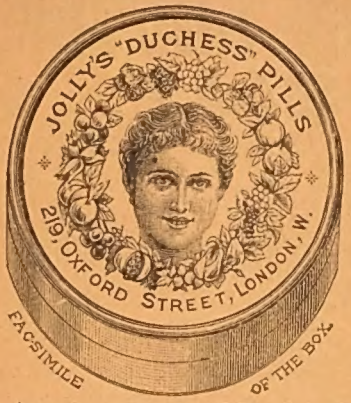
JOLLY'S "DUCHESS" PILLS



For Pale Faces. Anæmia, or Poverty of Blood, is the cause of the many pale faces we see at the present day. Anæmia is usually accompanied or followed by Indigestion or Debility, Irregularity, Depression of Spirits, Fatigue, Faintness, Nausea, Headaches, Pains in the Side and Back, Palpitation and Coughs. If neglected, more serious affections frequently follow. Jolly's "Duchess" Pills will restore colour, health, strength, and beauty, and make the palest face clear and rosy, thus producing a lovely complexion. A box containing 60 doses, sufficient to cure any ordinary case, post free 2/6, or six boxes for 12/6, from

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219, Oxford Street, London, W.

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A doctor's widow knows of a simple, inexpensive remedy that permanently destroys the roots, and will forward particulars free to all those afflicted sending stamped envelope. — Address, Mrs. B. D. WOOD, 179, Westminster Bridge Road, London.

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Permanently cured in a few days by a simple, inexpensive self-treatment. Particulars free on receipt of stamped addressed envelope to DR. A. M. CURTIS, York Chambers, Adelphi, London, W.C.

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On receipt of stamped envelope, a lady who cured herself of Deafness and Noises in the Head, after fifteen years of suffering, will send to all afflicted free particulars of the Remedy, which is simple, safe, sure and inexpensive. Address —MRS. C. E. AUSTIN, 2, Lambeth Square, London, S.E.

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Permanently cured. A Pamphlet giving sound practical advice and particulars of a successful treatment for a rapid, simple, and inexpensive home cure, forwarded free to all upon receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Prof. B. L. HOLT, Argyll Chambers, West Strand, London.

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On receipt of stamped envelope a lady will gladly send free particulars of a simple remedy which cured her husband (without his knowledge) of the craving for Alcohol, to which he had been for twenty years a victim. Address, in confidence, Mrs. L. A. NORRIS, 7, Addington Crescent, York Road, London, S.E.

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If so, wear the "A D" Invisible Elevators (Regd.). Will increase your height up to four inches; the only approved means; detection impossible; simple, inexpensive. Send stamped envelope for particulars to the ORIENTAL TOILET CO. (B 5 Dept.), 87, Strand, London.

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A lady will, on receipt of stamped envelope, send free particulars of a new French Remedy, which permanently removes all Superfluous Hairs, destroying the roots *without injuring the skin*. Simple and inexpensive. Address, Madame F. B.," c/o Fontaine et Cie., 1, Piccadilly Circus, London.

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CURED. A Lady having cured her husband secretly of intemperate habits, will gladly send particulars of the remedy on receipt of stamped envelope.—Mrs. S. S. BARRINGTON, 4, Featherstone Bldgs., LONDON, W.C.

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On receipt of stamped addressed envelope a lady will send to those afflicted with Superfluous Hairs, free particulars of a simple remedy which *permanently* removed a large growth from her sister's face without injuring the skin. Address, in confidence, Miss E. R. DALE, 20, Belvedere Rd., Lambeth, London.

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Reduced Sale Price.	Reduced Sale Price.	Reduced Sale Price.	Reduced Sale Price.
6ft. by 9ft. 7/6	9ft. by 9ft. 11/-	10½ft. by 12ft. 18/-	12ft. by 15ft. 25/6
8ft. by 9ft. 9/-	9ft. by 10½ft. 13/6	12ft. by 12ft. 21/-	12ft. by 18ft. 30/-
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In Rich Oriental and Indian Art Designs, measuring 6ft. by 3ft. which for price, real value, weight and richness of manufacture will be found unapproachable.

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The Right Honourable The VISCOUNTESS MELVILLE writes: "I am very pleased with the 'Royal' Velvet Hearthrugs to hand, and would like four more Hearthrugs. Her ladyship would also like two Velvet Carpets at 39/-, one ditto 60/6 to match them. Cheque £3 11s. inclosed."

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REDUCED SALE PRICE LIST,	4½ft. by 7ft. 11/-	VELVET PILE BRUSSELS CARPET SQUARES.	9ft. by 12ft. 38/-	
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	7½ft. by 9ft. 23/-		12ft. by 13½ft. 59/-	
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1897 PROCLAMATION.

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THE RICHEST PROVISION in **KNOWLEDGE** made **ABSOLUTELY EASY** for the **ACCUMULATION** of this **INCOME.** Write to Messrs. F. HODGSON & SON, Carpet Manufacturers, of the City of Leeds, who will provide you with full information, posting you **free** (if, when writing, you mention this paper) a large, amazingly interesting, valuable, instructive, and detailed illustrated "Commemoration" Reduction Catalogue, showing you what you can save, what to buy, and where to buy Carpets, Mats, and Hearthrugs of every manufacture, including Wilton, Plush, Brussels Velvet, Antique, Foreign, and Furs, also **QUEEN'S ROYAL HOUSEHOLD, PRUDENTIAL, ECLIPSE,** and **ALARM CARPETS** and **HEARTHRUGS** (Regd.). Also Blankets, Curtains, Sheetings, etc., and a thousand other articles wanted in every household. (Copyright.)

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1 Magnificently Rich Cream-Coloured Curly Sheepskin

HEARTHRUG,

average size 6ft. by 3ft., perfection in quality.

1 Beautiful Reversible Art Crimson Plush

BED RUG, SOFA COVER, OR TABLE COVER,

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lined woollen cloth throughout, pinked edges, best finish, ornamental to any room.

1 Elegant HAIR BRUSH, highly finished, with mirror back.

"Given" Away.

Providing "Short Stories" Coupon, 15/5/97, is quoted, a FREE GIFT will be inclosed—a very handsome Electro-Silver Plated "OWL" PEPPER STAND, with coloured eyes and gilt feet.

Cash returned if not satisfied.

(Signed) F. HODGSON & SON.

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When this Design is wanted in Hearthrug or Carpet as shown above, kindly quote Registered No. 238495.

6ft. by 9ft.	Reduced Sale Price	4s. 9d.	9ft. by 15ft.	Reduced Sale Price	12s 9d.
7½ft. by 9ft.		5s. 11d.	12ft. by 12ft.		12s. 9d.
9ft. by 9ft.		7s. 6d.	12ft. by 13½ft.		14s. 6d.
9ft. by 10½ft.		8s. 6d.	12ft. by 15ft.		15s. 9d.
9ft. by 12ft.		9s. 6d.	12ft. by 18ft.		19s. 6d.
10½ft. by 12ft.		11s. 6d.	12ft. by 21ft.		22s. 6d.

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

Blairgowrie, Maybole, N.B., Aug. 3rd.—Lady Hunter Blair writes: "Will Messrs. F. Hodgson & Son send her another 'Prudential' Carpet, same as before, crimson and gold, dimensions, 9ft. by 10½ft. Cheque inclosed.

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